

CHECK AND COUNTER-CHECK

By BRANDER MATTHEWS and GEORGE H. JESSOP

COMPLETE

JANUARY, 1888

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

J.B. LIPPINCOTT & CO. PHILADELPHIA

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Announcement for 1888.

THE complete novels that have already been arranged for to appear in LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE for 1888 are as follows:

"CHECK AND COUNTER-CHECK."

By BRANDER MATTHEWS and GEORGE H. JESSOP (January).

"HOME ECHOES." After the German.

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"THE YELLOW SNAKE."

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By MISS M. ELLIOTT SEAWELL.

Also Novels by Amélie Rives, Edgar Saltus, and Julia Magruder.

This series of novels, it will readily be seen, will be of great literary value and interest. Miss Amélie Rives has excited universal admiration by the short stories and poems that she has contributed to current magazines, and a novel from her pen will be eagerly welcomed by a wide circle. Edgar Saltus, a brilliant young author, whose "Mr. Incoul's Misadventure" was excellent in itself and gave promise of still more brilliant performance in the future, is another rising name. William H. Bishop and Brander Matthews have an established position among contemporary novelists, and the new novels from their pen will be equal to any of their former work. Mrs. A. L. Wister's adaptations are known to all readers of American fiction. Miss Julia Magruder, whose "Across the Chama" and "At Anchor" (in *Lippincott's Magazine*) were hailed as among the most charming of modern Southern novels, is another writer with an audience already created. Miss M. Elliott Seawell is the author of "Maid Marian," a delightful little extravaganza in the December, 1886, number of *Lippincott's*, and the novel which she has written for this magazine will add another star to the galaxy of Southern novelists.

In addition, Albion W. Tourgée will contribute a notable series of stories, illustrating the interesting and exciting phases of the legal profession, under the general title of "With Gauge & Swallow." Each story will be complete in itself, though all will revolve around a common centre of interest.

Stories, essays, and poems may be expected from Amélie Rives, Edgar Fawcett, Thomas Nelson Page, H. H. Boyesen, Joaquin Miller, Walt Whitman, Will Carleton, M. G. McClelland, Helen G. Cone, Mrs. S. M. B. Piatt, J. J. Piatt, C. L. Hildreth, Will H. Hayne, Lucy C. Lillie, Edith M. Thomas, and many others; and autobiographical articles, dealing with interesting phases of their career, from Lotta, Fanny Davenport, H. H. Boyesen, Edgar Saltus, Clara Barton, Belva Lockwood, Frances E. Willard, etc., etc.

A number of ideas new to periodical literature will be exploited during the year. For example, the February number will be written entirely by women for women, and will contain a novel by Mrs. Wister; a novelette by Miss Amélie Rives; poems by Mrs. Piatt, Helen G. Cone, Edith M. Thomas, and Ella Wheeler-Wilcox; autobiographical sketches by Belva Lockwood, Fanny Davenport, etc.; and articles of general interest by other famous women of the country.

The following is a list of the complete novels that have already appeared in LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE:

No. 241,—*"Check and Counter-Check,"* by Brander Matthews and George H. Jessop;
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No. 234,—*"The Whistling Buoy,"* by Charles Barnard;
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No. 229,—*"Sinfire,"* by Julian Hawthorne;
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CHECK AND COUNTER-CHECK:

A TALE OF TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

BY

BRANDER MATTHEWS

AND

GEORGE H. JESSOP.

PHILADELPHIA:

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

CHECK AND COUNTER CHECK

A TALK OF TWENTY-FOUR HOURS

BRAND NEW

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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1888.

CHECK AND COUNTER-CHECK:

A TALE OF TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

CHAPTER I.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT'S SITTING-ROOM.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT'S bachelor apartment was on the seventh floor of a tall building overlooking a broad square almost in the centre of New York. Years ago the broad square had been named in honor of an American President; and the tall building, only recently remodelled, now recalled the title of an English duke. The building was as solid as the nobleman was stolid; and it lifted its roof high over its neighbors with as haughty an air of superiority as even an English peer can achieve. Its lower floor, level with the street, was a single huge store wherein one of the chief jewellers of the world vended his glittering wares. Most of the rooms on the second floor were leased by a sporting club, composed of fast and fashionable young men, many of whom, having taken to horses, were now making ready to go to the dogs. The upper floors were devoted to apartments for bachelors; and into these, as into the monastery on Mount Athos, no women were allowed to enter save when one of the inhabitants asked a married sister to matronize a flock of girls who came to have a cup of tea, ostensibly, and in reality to investigate the bachelor's den.

From the seventh floor the outlook was wider than it was below. The air one breathed at that height was purer than the dust-laden breezes which often blew along the lower levels. The streets of New York are dirty, for the most part, but to a man who chooses adroitly they offer not a few perspectives to be studied with pleasure. Paul Stuyvesant knew what he was about when he took rooms at the top of the house, and he had never regretted his selection. What he sought

especially was quiet; and this he had found. Indeed, he had found more,—a certain faculty of abstracting himself from the busy life of the city beneath him and about him,—a power, as it were, of cutting himself off from the rest of the world.

This morning there was neither dust nor noise. Almost the first snow-storm of the winter had come and gone during the night. A white blanket covered the cornices of the building across the way, and the cross-pieces of the giant telegraph-poles were encrusted with sparkling crystals. The thin layer of snow clogged the car-tracks on the street far below and deadened the sound of the horses' feet. The roar of the traffic of the great city arose muffled; and even the sharp note of the car-bells, which came up clearly enough now and again, seemed farther off than before. Although it was late on Friday morning, there was a hush almost as though it were Sunday. Perhaps it was owing to this unusual calm that Stuyvesant was oversleeping himself.

His apartment consisted of a sitting-room, a bedroom, a bath-room, a tiny hall, and a closet or two. It had an advantage over most of the others in that it was on the corner. The large square sitting-room had four windows, two looking out to the east and two facing the south. It was a bright and cheerful room, generally; and now, as the slight snow-storm slowly ceased and the sun gained power to force its rays through the dense gray clouds, this room had a very pleasant aspect. It was such a room as a man might be glad to enter and sorry to leave.

When the sun had at last turned itself full on and flooded the place with its brightness, a boldly-painted portrait which hung on the western wall next to the entrance-door glowed with life and seemed ready to start from its frame. This picture was singularly strong in color, and it had not a little of the mellow tone and golden richness which lend so great a charm to the paintings of the great Venetians. It was the portrait of a handsome man of about thirty or thirty-two years of age; he was tall and dark; his countenance was aquiline; his eyes had a penetrating glance as they followed a visitor about the room inquisitively. To these eyes, indeed, the visitor involuntarily recurrd; and he could find in them a look of curiosity,—a quality most precious, and objectionable only when misapplied to the pettinesses of existence. The impression made by the picture varied, of course, with the character of those who might look at it. Most people were pleased with it; most people, if closely cross-questioned, could have been made to confess that it looked as though the man who had sat for it was pleased with himself. But so frank, manly, and engaging was this man as revealed by the artist, that most people did not give this revelation a second thought. The picture was a portrait of the owner of the apartment, painted by Charley Vaughn, to whose sister Katharine, Stuyvesant was engaged to be married.

On the narrow space of wall between the two windows opposite the picture was a tall frame divided longitudinally into three sections, in which were diplomas. One bore witness that the owner of this department was a Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, and this was enriched with the seal of Columbia College, Novi Eboraci. The second testified that the University of Göttingen had conferred on him the

degree of J. U. D. The third was a certificate of membership in the famous fraternity of Alpha Omega, the secret society which Stuyvesant had joined in college, and members of which he had met all over the world in the most unexpected places.

Between the windows on the southern side was a panoply of arms, or at least what might pass for such at first sight. On closer inspection, the weapons were seen not to be those that are customarily arrayed in trophies. In the centre of the panel was the curiously-shaped blade of a guillotine, a relic of '93. Below this hung a Chippewa war-club with a dull dark stain on its murderous knob. A pair of hand-cuffs and a rusty knuckle-duster dangled beneath. Among half a dozen other unconventional weapons were a cruel-looking gimlet knife and a roughly-wrought bowie on the broad blade of which could still be seen the cross-hatching of the file from which it had been made. This last object of interest had been a present from Charley Vaughn.

Two or three hickory sticks blazed and crackled in the fireplace on the northern wall of the room. On each side of the broad wooden mantel-piece were book-cases packed with solid tomes as high as a man might reach while standing on his feet. Some of these were portly law-books, sedate in their sheepskin coverings. Some were books of reference in German, French, and English. Some were the books that no gentleman's library should be without; but of these there were only a few, and they looked as fresh as when they had left the bindery. On a shelf level with the eye and within easy reach of the right hand as the owner of the room should stand before the fire, there was a row of books of all sorts and conditions. Some of them had been handsomely bound, and some of them were still in the frail paper covers in which they had been issued; but all bore marks of repeated readings. Chief among them was a set of the complete works of Edgar Allan Poe; the volume most worn was that containing "The Murder in the Rue Morgue" and "The Gold-Bug." Next to this stood a paper-covered copy of "The Moonstone" by Mr. Wilkie Collins and an English railway edition of "A Confidential Agent" by Mr. James Payn. Near these were "The Leavenworth Case" by Miss Anna Katharine Green, "His Natural Life" by Mr. Marcus Clarke, "The Mark of Cain" by Mr. Andrew Lang, and "The New Arabian Nights" by Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson. The "Mémoires de Vidocq" elbowed half a dozen tales by Émile Gaboriau and M. Fortuné du Boisgobey; and "Les Morts Bizarres" of M. Jean Richepin brought up the end of the line.

A broad desk-table was in the centre of the room. Its flat surface supported a student-lamp, and also a large photograph in a velvet frame with velvet curtains drawn over the portrait closely, so that no indiscreet eye might recognize the features of the lady. Bits of paper of different sizes, each of them having a sentence or two written on it hastily, some in ink and some in pencil, littered the centre of the desk. It might fairly be guessed that these were the accumulated notes intended to serve in the composition of the thick manuscript the sheets of which were heaped together just under the student-lamp. On the first page of this manuscript was written "A History of Circumstantial Evidence: with an Analysis of its Fallacies. By Paul Stuyvesant,

J.U.D., Adjunct Professor of the Canon Law in Columbia College." Apparently the author had been laboring on his book until very late at night, and had gone to bed as soon as he had done his stent of work, without waiting to gather up his scattered notes. Perhaps in this delayed labor might be found the reason why he was sleeping so late this morning.

CHAPTER II.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT AT BREAKFAST.

It was past ten o'clock when Stuyvesant came out of his bedroom into the parlor. He crossed over to one of the windows and threw it open. A cloud of tiny particles of frozen snow blew into the room, scintillating in the sunshine. After inhaling a few long breaths of the fresh air, he closed the window, but stood still for a moment, looking out over the city, quieter than New York is wont to be, even in winter. In the strong light, it could be seen that the portrait on the wall behind him was a striking likeness, although perhaps a certain dreaminess, which might lie latent in the original, had been accentuated by the artist. Perhaps also the original had developed in the two or three years which had apparently elapsed since the portrait was painted. There was more firmness in the man than in the picture,—and, it may be, more keenness also. Rich as was the coloring of the portrait, it was not warmer than the flush which arose to the face of the man as he stepped to the table in the centre of the room and took up the photograph-frame which stood there. He parted the velvet curtains and gazed intently on the face of the woman they had concealed. It was a pretty face; and he looked at it long and lovingly. Then he kissed it once, twice, thrice, and set it back on the table. It was a photograph of Miss Katharine Vaughn.

As he glanced about the room, which seemed calm and comfortable, he was conscious of a certain vague regret that he could not bring his bride there when he was married in the spring instead of taking a little house in a little side-street somewhere near Central Park. Then he dismissed the desire, instantly. Although he was a college professor, Paul Stuyvesant was a young man and an ardent lover. Whatever he did, he did with a will, well and thoroughly. Just now his whole thought was of his future bride and how he might make her happiest. It was because he had lingered later with her the evening before that he had been obliged to work on until far into the night. Fortunately, the fortnight's vacation for Christmas and New Year's was not yet over. It was Friday, the 3d of January, and he had no lectures to deliver until Monday. The day was his own, and he might do with it as he pleased.

There was a knock at the door, and one of the janitor's assistants brought in a tray, containing Stuyvesant's breakfast, which was the only meal supplied in the apartment-house. The books and magazines which littered a small table in the corner were hastily cleared away and the breakfast-tray was set down. The attendant laid a letter and the *Gotham Gazette* of that morning by the side of the tray, and left the room.

Stuyvesant took his seat at the table; but before he tasted the golden Florida orange with which he always broke his fast, he took up the letter. It was from Charley Vaughn:

The Yubens.

Jan. 2nd

Dear Post Script;

Perhaps you may remember that you promised to go with me Saturday to see the new pictures. If you don't recall the circumstance this will serve to remind you of it—while it informs you that the engagement is off! I can't meet you because I'm to meet the Bishop of Tweedo to talk about a stained-glass window for his new church. You know he is a man of the world,—they used to call him the Apostle to the gentiles—and I think I shall suggest Dives and Lazarus as a subject. With some new ruby glass I have just seen I can put Dives into a red-hot hell. That's a job that would have puzzled Titian! I rob you, Paul (of an appointment) to pay Saint Peter—that's the name of the new church.

So long,

Charley.

P. S.—I've been trying to read this and it seems scarcely legible. I see I haven't put in the commas and things. Season to suit, yourself. I hold that punctuation is the thief of time.

C. V.

Stuyvesant read this brief letter with some surprise. He did not understand the reason given for the cancelling of the engagement. He glanced again over the letter, and he remarked in it what seemed to him like forced gayety. Charley was naturally humorous. He had a keen perception of the comic, and his conversation abounded in unconventional fun. But this note was not exactly what Stuyvesant expected from him. The humor struck him as artificial. It seemed to him almost as though the note were the result of an effort. In general Charley was as light-hearted a young fellow as could be found in all New York, and he had a flow of spirits as far removed as possible from any suggestion of strain. And yet this was not the first time that Stuyvesant had seen signs of a certain constraint in Charley Vaughn.

He laid the letter on one side and began his breakfast. The sun, streaming in through the window behind him, set the room in a glow. As Paul was pouring out his coffee he remarked that the tray was not quite level; one corner was higher than the other; and beneath it he found a thin little book, inside of which was a bundle of slips of paper. In clearing off the table he had overlooked this. He recognized it at once as the pass-book which he had sent to the Metropolitan National Bank to be balanced, and which he must have taken out of his pocket the night before. The bundle of slips was a collection of the checks which he had drawn during the past six months.

Only half a year before had Paul Stuyvesant opened his first bank-account, depositing the check for the salary of his professorship. Re-

fore then he had only just about money enough to get along comfortably and to make both ends meet; and although in Europe he had drawn money through banking-houses, he had never before kept a balance at his banker's. Old as he was, a check-book was still a novelty to him; and it was with a boyish pleasure that he broke the band which encircled the thin bundle and began to turn over the cancelled checks. To finger them made him feel more certain of his position; it gave him an assurance of his financial stability. As he glanced at them his mind ran ahead into the future, and he saw himself not only paying his own way but making a home for his wife. Then he paused, for in his hand, at the moment, was the very check he had drawn to pay for the engagement-ring he had given to Katharine Vaughn. Not a few of the other checks could be connected with her more or less directly. Here was one to a bookseller, and, while most of the books had been for his own use, it paid also for an "Evangeline" he had sent to her. There was another next to it, drawn in payment of the little supper after the theatre-party which he had given her and which Mrs. Duncan had kindly matronized,—the supper at which Charley had flirted so funnily with the pretty girl from Yonkers. Yet a third was to the order of a florist; and as he looked at it there arose a vision of Katharine Vaughn as she stood before him at the ball, radiantly beautiful, supremely happy, and holding in her hand the bunch of roses he had provided for her.

As Stuyvesant turned this check over, he took up the one beneath it. He recognized that also, and he knew where the money had gone. The check was to the order of Charles Vaughn, and it had been posted to him only a fortnight before, to repay the money Paul had borrowed to pay his slight losses the last time they had played poker. He had been unlucky that evening, and he had not yet forgotten the four deuces with which Charley had beaten his ace-full. He smiled, as the recollection of a good game of poker seems to make most Americans smile. As he turned the check over on the others he was struck by the endorsements. Most of the checks had been deposited at once by the payees. This alone had apparently passed from hand to hand, almost as though it were a bank-note. It was endorsed four times: Charley had given it to M. Zalinski, who had handed it to James Burt, and he in turn had passed it along to Eliphalet Duncan. Now, Stuyvesant knew Eliphalet Duncan as well as he knew Charley Vaughn; and they knew each other very well. That a check which he had given to Charley should find its way into the hands of Eliphalet, after passing through those of two unknown men like M. Zalinski and James Burt, struck him as peculiar. M. Zalinski—the name seemed somehow familiar, although he could not place it at once; the handwriting was stiff and foreign: probably the man was a Polish Jew. The signature of James Burt was bold and irregular, as though it was the result of main strength misapplied.

Stuyvesant turned over the rest of his checks carelessly as he went on with his breakfast. Then he took up the *Gotham Gazette*, while he smoked a cigarette with his coffee. The newspaper happened to be so folded that the eighth page was under his eye. He had not more than glanced down the first column before he checked the cup which he was

raising to his lips. A curt paragraph informed the readers of the *Gotham Gazette* that the case of James Burt, charged before Police Justice Van Dam with having burglars' tools in his possession, was postponed until the following Wednesday, at the request of his lawyer, Mr. Eliphalet Duncan.

Stuyvesant laid down the paper and stared straight before him in deep thought. He had found apparently the connecting link between two of the four endorsements on his check. James Burt had paid it over to Eliphalet Duncan as a retainer. That seemed simple enough. But who was M. Zalinski? And how came Charley Vaughn to be paying money to a man who had dealings with a burglar? These questions he put to himself repeatedly, and he found no answer. Charley was neither eccentric nor fast; and it was no easy task to account for his having passed Stuyvesant's check to a man who passed it on again to a house-breaker. The combination of circumstances was singular, certainly, but probably it was of no significance whatever. Charley had behaved queerly of late in more ways than one, it was true, but no doubt he could explain in a few words this curious linking of his name with a malefactor's. Paul said to himself that he was attaching too much importance to a trifle, and that a perfectly innocent explanation would be forthcoming in due time. Of course, if Charley were in trouble in any way, Stuyvesant would do all that he could to help the boy out. Katharine Vaughn was a bond between them. Paul was very fond of Charley for his own sake also, and he was ready to go great lengths, if he could relieve the young fellow from any worry which might be wearing on him. Stuyvesant was not eight years older than his future brother-in-law, but he felt toward him as an orphaned older brother might feel toward the younger brother he had brought up. Not only for Kitty's sake but for Charley himself he would gladly do whatsoever might lie in his power.

For a few minutes Paul sat silently thinking, and not conscious of the series of concentric smoke-rings which he was blowing, one through the other. When his cigarette burnt down and scorched his fingers, he aroused himself. Lighting a second cigarette, he took up the newspaper again. He turned it, and on the first page he found this despatch from Paris, set forth with a hydra-like profusion of "display heads:"

"THE EXTRAORDINARY THEFT OF A PICTURE!"

"The art world of Paris was thrown into a high state of excitement to-day by a rumor that the great painting of Mary Magdalen by Titian had been stolen from the handsome apartment of Mr. Samuel Sargent, the well-known American millionaire and chief owner of the Transcontinental Telegraph Company. This is the great picture which was so romantically recovered two years ago after having been lost to sight for nearly two centuries. It was painted in Ferrara in 1520 for Lucrezia Borgia, and it had been lost since the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is a single head treated in the great artist's most glorious manner. Mr. Sargent has been away in Russia for more than six months, leaving his magnificently decorated apartment in the Avenue

de l'Opéra locked up. When it was opened, the Mary Magdalen was gone. It had been cut from the frame. The police do not know when the robbery had been committed; but they say they have a clue to the thieves."

"Now, that is really very curious indeed," said Stuyvesant to himself. "This is the second paragraph in to-day's paper which is of interest to Charley."

Just then there came a sharp knock at the door.

CHAPTER III.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT RECEIVES A VISIT.

STUYVESANT looked up as he cried, "Come in!"

The door opened, and Charley Vaughn appeared. He walked straight to the blazing fire and began rubbing his hands.

"Well?" said Stuyvesant, interrogatively.

"Don't talk to me till I've thawed myself out," Charley answered. "It's a climb to get up here to this seventh heaven of yours, and it's lucky there's an alleviator. A man who had to clamber up to this sky-parlor on his hind legs would be entitled to join the Alpine Club. And the way the wind whistles up and down the perpendicular railroad out there would make a man shiver even if he had been up Mont Blanc."

Charley Vaughn was a lively little fellow, with curly blond hair and a quizzical face. He wore a pair of eye-glasses, behind which his sharp blue eyes were never still.

"Is it very cold out?" asked Stuyvesant.

"It isn't the cold I mind," Charley replied, taking a cigarette from a cup of cloisonné enamel which stood on the mantel-piece. "It's the confounded uncertainty of the thing. I'm in Greenland's icy mountains one day and on India's coral strand the next. In the course of a week Old Probabilities serves us up a great deal of weather of assorted sizes,—if you don't see what you want, ask for it."

"If you want a match you will find a box on the book-case behind you," suggested Stuyvesant, smiling.

"Thank you," returned Charley, gravely. "Let me beg of you not to rise. I can help myself. I should hate to put you to any inconvenience."

He lighted his cigarette, and then took up a favorite masculine position on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire and his feet well apart. He puffed away in silence for a minute, glancing about the room. At last his eyes fell on the breakfast-tray.

"You got my letter, I see," he said, watching Stuyvesant closely.

"Yes," answered Paul, dryly.

There was an awkward pause for a few seconds. Charley kept his eyes on his host until Stuyvesant happened to look up; their glances met, and the guest, with a little nervous laugh, dropped his gaze to the floor.

"I came in to explain how it is," Charley began, in a hesitating way in marked contrast with his glib speech at his entrance.

Stuyvesant smoked on silently.

"I can tell you how it is," pursued Charley. "I like the Bishop of Tuxedo: he's a white man, for all he's a gospel-sharp. And so I thought you wouldn't mind my postponing our engagement for to-morrow."

There was another awkward pause, and then Stuyvesant said,—

"I thought you hated stained-glass with a holy hatred?"

"I do hate it, of course; but——"

"But you like the bishop so much that you are willing to make an exception in his favor?"

"Exactly," said Charley, quickly seizing at the explanation obligingly offered.

"Ah!" Stuyvesant rejoined, with significance.

"Now, what do you mean by that contemptible *ah*?" cried Charley, with a show of indignation.

"Nothing," answered Stuyvesant, coolly,— "nothing much. Only this, in fact; that I heard you say last week that you would as soon compose music specially for the hand-organ as make a design for stained-glass, in the execution of which the artist was wholly at the mercy of the artisan."

"Did I say that?" asked Charley, pitifully.

"I heard you," was the uncompromising reply.

"Oh, well," the artist responded at last, "if you are going to search my record and try to pile up petty inconsistencies, I shall not say another word. Of course there isn't anything to explain." Here he glanced again at Stuyvesant sharply. And again Stuyvesant looked up and caught his eye.

"Can he suspect anything?" thought Charley. "He studies my face as though my secret were written there in black and white."

"What is the matter with the boy?" was Paul's mental query. "He is not straightforward with me this morning. I wonder what he has on his mind?"

"You lawyers are always so sharp," said Charley, at last. "You seem to think you have the whole world in the witness-box. By the way, how is the big book getting on?" And he made a gesture toward the pile of manuscript on the table.

Stuyvesant saw his chance and seized it promptly.

"It's a long job, of course," he said, "and I have hard work to get all the material I need. I think I shall go down and ask Eliphalet Duncan if he has some fresher facts for me. You know he has been engaged in several important criminal cases."

"Has he?" asked Charley, with indifference.

"I see by the paper this morning," Stuyvesant went on, "that he is to defend an alleged burglar,—James Burt." He never took his eyes from Vaughn's face, but the face made no sign.

"I believe," continued Stuyvesant, "that this Burt is a pal of Zalinski's."

"Of Mike Zalinski's?" Charley inquired, eagerly.

"That is the man's name, probably," Paul answered. "Do you know him?"

"I've met him," said Charley.

Stuyvesant did not like to push the matter further. He felt that it was impossible for him to ask Charley what his connection with Zalin-ski might be. No doubt it was innocent enough; and yet if the boy were in trouble in any way, a few words of counsel might be of value to him. Stuyvesant did not like to ask any more questions, and he would have been glad had he been able to invite Charley's confidence more directly. There was something in his young friend's manner which he had never seen there before. It was a vague restlessness,—a sort of subdued feverishness.

"Don't you feel well, Charley?" Paul asked, suddenly.

"Why shouldn't I feel well?" he replied, indignantly.

"I thought you looked worn or worried," Stuyvesant returned. "That's why I asked you."

"Oh, I'm all right," Charley rejoined. "I'm as chubby as a cherub and as chipper as a chipmunk."

"If I can do anything for you——" began Stuyvesant.

"But you can't," interrupted Charley, hastily. "Can you minister to a mind diseased? I mean, can't you be satisfied until I pack myself up in paper-shavings as if I were imported glass-ware, this side up, with care?"

"I think it would be better for you if you took more care of yourself," returned his friend.

"Do you want to prescribe for me too?" asked Charley. "I hope you are not a homeopath, like my mother. Whenever I have a cold or a cough she drops little pills down my throat till I feel like a shot-tower."

Stuyvesant laughed at this picturesquely humorous suggestion. Vaughn, as though anxious to change the subject, had gone over to his friend's portrait.

"That's not bad, you know, though I say it as shouldn't," he remarked, as he drew off and examined the picture critically. "I don't believe I shall ever get the values better than I did then. The color's pretty harsh in some places, though. But the composition isn't so bad, after all. You see, you stoop, Paul, and one of your shoulders is higher than the other: most people wouldn't notice it, perhaps."

"Thank you," said the subject.

"You needn't thank me," replied the painter; "I saw it plainly enough, and that's why I posed you as I did. I flatter myself that I made Art conceal the defects of Nature."

"Go on," Stuyvesant laughed, "go on! Don't mind my feelings."

"I don't," said Vaughn. "When I stand before a portrait I know no mercy; I forget all friendship, I ignore all the conventions of civilization. That is why I do not hesitate to tell you that one side of your head is all out of drawing."

"In your picture?"

"On your body."

"Now, Charley——" began Stuyvesant, half laughing and half piqued.

"It is the frozen verity," the artist insisted. "You have no right to hold me responsible for the blunders of nature. The most I could do was to try and invent a scheme of color that would distract attention from the defects of the subject; and I think I have succeeded fairly well in that."

"Am I to understand that if you had done me exact justice I should appear on the canvas deformed?"

"No," replied Charley, gravely, "no, it is not as bad as that. In the main, you are not much amiss——"

"A thousand thanks——"

"But one side of your head is out of drawing; that I have said, and that I stick to! But I doubt if one man in a million, or even if one artist in ten, would find it out. You see that there is a glow to the picture, a richness and a mellowness like those of the best portraits of the great Venetians. And that is the result of using the marvellous medium I discovered after I once had a chance to restore a Sasso-Ferrato. I stretch my canvas myself and I prime it myself, as the old masters used to do. Then I lay on the color with a medium of my own compounding. When I retire from business I shall reveal the secret of that medium, and the whole world of painters will rise up and call me blessed. With that medium and a little touch of a varnish I know, I can make a cow-boy as romantic as a bull-fighter. I can shine up a picture of mine until it glows almost like a Titian."

"Have you seen the *Gotham Gazette* this morning?" asked Stuyvesant suddenly.

"No. Why?"

"There's a cable despatch in it which will interest you."

"Has the Queen at last discovered my genius? Has she cabled to the President requesting him to engage me to paint her portrait?" asked the artist.

"The news does not refer to you directly. No doubt Her Majesty will send for you some day, and perhaps you will tell her that her royal head is out of drawing too."

"I see that my truthful criticism of your anatomical imperfections still rankles in your shallow soul. Go on with the news. Of course if it does not refer to me personally by name I cannot think it important."

"The Mary Magdalen of Titian is stolen," Stuyvesant said.

"They have found that out at last, have they?" was the artist's reply.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Stuyvesant, surprised. "How did you know that it had been taken?"

Charley Vaughn looked up as though in wonder at the other's vehemence.

"I never supposed he came by it honestly," he answered, after a pause.

"He?" returned Paul. "Who?"

"The man in whose possession I found it first: in fact, I used to

regret that I didn't take it and keep it for myself when I first saw it," Charley replied, and his voice became more enthusiastic as he continued: "You don't know what a marvel it is. Titian never did anything else as good. The drawing is masterly, and the coloring is incomparable. I have never seen a picture I would rather steal."

"Are you in the habit of stealing pictures?" asked Stuyvesant, grimly.

"No," Vaughn answered, as gravely; "but I would make an exception in favor of this one."

After a momentary pause he added, "Let me see the paper."

Stuyvesant passed it to him, and he read the paragraph slowly.

"I see," he said, as he laid the newspaper down again and lighted a fresh cigarette. "This time there is no doubt that somebody has carried it off. The man, whoever he is, has a treasure, but it is a treasure he will have to keep to himself; he cannot show it to his friends; he cannot boast of it; he cannot sell it; he cannot let any one even suspect that he has it in his possession. I can understand how he feels, poor fellow."

"Are you pitying the thief?" asked Stuyvesant.

"You are not an artist, and you have never seen that picture, or you couldn't help pitying a man who had in his possession a gem of the first water which he dare not display and which he can enjoy only by stealth."

"When did you see it last?" inquired Stuyvesant.

"I'd sooner tell you when I saw it first," replied Charley, after a moment's hesitation. "You know I am almost the re-discoverer of that picture. I saw it in the window of a brocanteur near the Château d'Eau in Paris one day about four years ago. It was dusty and dirty, and the frame was almost broken to bits; but when my eye lighted on it I was fascinated. I went in and asked the man what he wanted for it. He said he had just given the refusal of it to a gentleman who was to return at three o'clock. If he didn't take it, I could have it for a thousand francs. I examined the picture carefully, and I felt sure that it was a genuine Titian and one of his best. I tried to beat the man down, of course, and told him it was impious to ask a thousand francs for an old crust like that. But he retorted that I needn't buy it if I didn't like it, and that even if I did like it the other gentleman had the refusal. As I looked at the picture, the longing for it grew on me. In my head I went over a list of the people I could ask to lend me a thousand francs. Of course I hadn't any money on hand. It was near the end of the month, and I was living on three francs a day, and there was a month's rent due. At last I made up my mind that I would take the picture and the seller with me in a cab to the banker's and I would vouch for the value of the picture and ask them to lend me the money to buy it. I didn't dare go away, for fear I should lose the chance. It was not twelve when I caught sight of it, and I waited there until three. Five minutes before the time expired, a gentleman came into the shop, and my heart dropped into my boots, P. D. Q. I knew him by sight: he was the manager of the London branch of a great firm of French picture-dealers. As soon as I saw him, I knew

that my chance was clean gone. He paid the thousand francs, and he had the picture put into his carriage. Just as he was driving off, I mustered up courage to ask what he would take for his bargain. I spoke French, but my tongue betrayed me, and he answered in English that he expected that his morning's work would pay a profit of ten thousand pounds,—only this and nothing more."

"Ten thousand pounds?" repeated Stuyvesant. "Is the Mary Magdalen worth anything like that?"

"They sold it to Sam Sargent for three hundred thousand francs," replied the artist, indignantly. "That's the sort of thing that makes Communists. I wanted that picture, and I could have appreciated it. Sargent got it, and he doesn't know the difference between Giorgione and Georges Ohnet: he deserved to have it stolen from him. He kept it shut up so that it was very hard for any one to get at it."

"From the way you received the news, Charley," said Stuyvesant, "and from what you said, I was beginning to think that the theft was some great practical joke and that you knew that the picture was gone some time ago."

"I confess the news didn't surprise me," the artist answered. "A clever man would have no great difficulty in getting into Sargent's apartments while he was away."

"How do you know that?" Stuyvesant asked.

Charley Vaughn flushed up as though he had made an awkward admission.

"Never mind how I know," he answered. "Let's change the subject. Are you going skating to-day?"

"I don't know," Stuyvesant returned. "I am going to call on Kitty at twelve, and if she likes——"

"I see: you will do as you are bid. Happy man, you are under petticoat-government already!—"

'Life, young man, is only
A slippery sheet of ice:
No girls there, it's lonely,—
One girl there, it's nice.'

Stuyvesant smiled at this scrap of college verse, and said,—

"Who was it who suggested that love is like a frozen river,—once break the ice, and you are sure to fall in?"

"I suppose," remarked Charley, "that that means it would be 'a cold day' for the girl."

Stuyvesant laughed.

"Slang is more natural to you than sentiment," he said.

Charley looked up with mock indignation. "You say that because you cannot see into my heart. If you could peer into the innermost recesses of my being, you——"

"Well?"

"Well, you could do more than I can do,—that's all," Charley returned. "And now I must be up and doing, with a heart for any fate. I wish you a good morning."

And with this he went toward the door.

"Good-morning," said Stuyvesant.

When Charley Vaughn reached the door, he paused as though in doubt. Then he turned, and in a hesitating way and with an obvious effort he spoke again :

"I say, Paul, are you superstitious?—like the Irish gentleman who wouldn't commit suicide on Friday because it was an unlucky day?"

"Why?" asked Stuyvesant.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Charley, grasping the door-knob again. "I thought I'd ask,—that's all. Some fellows are afraid of doing anything important on Friday."

"I am not," Stuyvesant returned.

"Neither am I," said Charley. "So long! See you later. I really must exude now."

CHAPTER IV.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT PAYS A VISIT.

AFTER Charley Vaughn left him, Stuyvesant remained for a minute or two in thought. There was something in the boy's manner that the elder man did not like. There was a certain suggestion of restraint all through the interview. Stuyvesant had noticed this when Charley first began to speak, and he had been conscious of it in the artist's last words as he went away. Just what this peculiarity might be, Paul could not precisely define for himself, but it seemed to him as though Charley were laboring under a suppressed excitement. Beyond all question, the young fellow was suffering from some tension of the nerves. And Stuyvesant could not help wondering whether this was due in any way to his relations with the M. Zalinski to whom he had given a check which M. Zalinski had passed to a burglar.

Still turning these things over in his mind, Stuyvesant threw his cigarette into the fire and began to dress to go out. He took off the morning-jacket in which he had breakfasted, and he buttoned himself up in a double-breasted coat which showed his tall and manly figure to advantage. He brushed his hat carefully before putting it on. He removed two or three shreds of lint from his heavy overcoat after he had wrapped himself up in it. Then he drew on a pair of seal-skin gloves, as he went out into the hall. When the elevator came up to take him down, he caught himself looking in the broad mirror which filled one side of that aerial vehicle. Unwittingly he had been examining his own appearance in the looking-glass. A sudden blush mantled his cheek; and then he smiled as he thought that six months before, he never would have dreamed of looking in a mirror. It was the desire to appear well in her eyes which tended to make a fop of him. He smiled again as he reflected that even the wayfaring man, though a fool, might know that he was going to see the woman he loved.

When he came out on the street, a sharp wind struck him, and he set out to walk briskly. The mid-day sun was shining brightly, and

under its rays the light layer of snow was melting fast. A coffee-colored compound covered the crossing, and in the centre of the streets there was a thin mass of chocolate mud. The rasping of iron shovels clearing away the snow from stoop and area rang in his ears as he sped on his way up the Avenue. The air was full of flying particles of snow, which the keen wind was scattering from the house-tops. Christmas greens still hung in the shop-windows; and now and again he saw a Christmas-tree, having served its turn, thrust out of doors into some cold corner. Here and there in the square, as he passed, groups of little children were trying to compact the dry snow into balls with which to assault one another.

Under the influence of the rapid walk and the bracing breeze Stuyvesant's spirits rose, and he succeeded in throwing aside the vague feeling of depression as though some ill fortune had impended,—a feeling which had overshadowed him ever since he had seen the name of James Burt on the check he had given to Charley Vaughn. As he breathed the pure air and as the exercise sent the blood to his cheeks, he began to take a more cheerful view of the matter. Before he reached her door, he was calling himself a fool for having attached any importance at all to what was probably a mere coincidence of no significance whatever.

Mrs. Vaughn's house was on a side-street only a few blocks above the square which Stuyvesant's apartments overlooked. It was a very little house, barely fifteen feet wide, trying vainly to make up in height what it lacked in breadth. Small as it was, however, it was amply large enough for its occupants, Mrs. Vaughn and her daughter Katharine. Mrs. Vaughn was a widow with only two children, Charles and Katharine. They had each an income fairly sufficient to satisfy them if their wishes were modest and their administration economical. Charles had been able to study at the Paris School of Fine Arts and to spend a year in Italy, chiefly at Venice. Katharine and her mother had always lived together; and Charles, although he had set up for himself and had a bedroom adjoining his studio, was very frequently at his mother's house. He was a good son, as Katharine was a good daughter; and the mother and her children lived happily.

Stuyvesant was ushered into a rear-parlor, miscalled the library. There was a book-case full of books on one side, it is true, but the room was altogether lacking in the severity which one associated involuntarily with the idea of a library. In reality, it was Miss Vaughn's sitting-room, and it reflected the presence of a young lady of a charming diversity of taste. An easel stood just in front of the window, so that the cold north light fell full on the charcoal drawing which it supported: this drawing was a bold and vigorous sketch of the head of the Hermes of Praxiteles. Obviously Miss Vaughn had a share of the pictorial faculty which distinguished her brother. Against the wall hung a large porcelain plaque, on which she had painted Charley's portrait. Back of the easel was an unpainted stand, on which a mass of modelling-clay was rapidly drying into useless shapelessness. On the table in the centre of the room were the latest magazines, *The Nation*, and the

Saturday Review, and two books which looked as though they had just been laid down. One was wide open, and the other, resting across it, had half a dozen marks preserving precious passages. The open book was Herbert Spencer's "Data of Ethics;" and the book with the book-marks was Browning's "Dramatis Personæ."

As Stuyvesant entered this pretty room of a pretty girl and took a seat amid its characteristic disorder, a bright voice came floating down from the floor above:

"Is that you, Paul? Oh, I'm so glad! Just wait. I'll be down in a minute."

A minute passed, and two, and ten,—and Paul still sat in lonely silence. He began to be a little impatient. He arose, and walked up and down the room three or four times. Then he took up a magazine, and, resuming his seat, he turned its leaves with indifference. A paper on "Political Cohesion" caught his eye, and in a few seconds he became absorbed in it.

So absorbed was he that he did not hear the light rustle of a dress as Katharine Vaughn floated airily down-stairs. He had his back to her, and she came behind him and clasped her hands over his eyes.

"Guess who it is!" she cried.

"And what reward shall I have if I guess aright?" he answered, gravely.

"I don't know," was her reply.

"But I know what I shall insist on," said Stuyvesant. "It is Kitty!"

"Somebody must have told you!" was her laughing confession as she withdrew her hands.

"And this is the reward I claim," said Stuyvesant, as he sprang up and clasped her in his arms and kissed her.

"Don't, Paul," she cried, "don't! You will muss my hair; and I've just been fixing it. There, that will do."

"Just one more," he pleaded.

"Well, then, just one."

He took two.

"And now," she said, "sit down where I can see you, and behave like a lady, and not like a great, big, rough bear!"

Stuyvesant obeyed her, and took a seat on a sofa; she came and sat down by his side. Probably no one who might see a photograph of Miss Katharine Vaughn would call her beautiful, but certainly no one could talk to her half an hour without declaring her charming. Her face was not sufficiently dignified or regular to deserve to be accepted as beautiful, but she had lively eyes, a bright smile, lovely, light golden hair, which clustered in little curls behind her ears and around her neck, and she was received as a pretty girl in a city where there is no lack of pretty girls. Perhaps her charm lay rather in her manner than in her looks,—in her expression, in her variety, in her brilliancy. But that she was charming, no one who knew her well would ever dream of denying; that she was pretty, few would dispute; and that she was really beautiful, Paul Stuyvesant believed as he believed in the immortality of his soul.

"Don't you want to come out for a walk?" asked Stuyvesant, when the first fervor of the meeting was over.

"I want to walk, of course," she answered, "but I can't. I meant to have told you yesterday evening, but I forgot. At one o'clock I'm going to a grabiola."

"A what?" he inquired, surprised by this strange vocable.

"A grabiola," she replied, laughing; "that's what I call it. It is a girls' lunch where there are so many of us that we don't sit down, but have to stand around and *grab* our food the best way we can. That's a grabiola. I hate 'em generally: even regular sit-down luncheons are poky enough, goodness knows."

"Then why go to this one?"

"Because——" She hesitated.

"Because?"

"Well, if you must know, I want to go because there'll be lots of girls there that I haven't seen since our engagement was announced; and they'll all have to congratulate me. I like that. Besides, some of them will be so envious that they'll be green; and I like to see them step up to the captain's office and pay over their little compliment."

Stuyvesant laughed gently.

"What a little vixen I'm going to have for a wife!" he said.

"If you are frightened at the prospect——" she began.

"I hope I do not look scared," he interrupted.

"If you could hear the way some of those girls talk, you would be scared out of your seven senses.—Are there seven senses, or five, or three?—I always forget," she asked, with amusing frankness.

"And how can you expect me to remember," he answered, gallantly, "when you know that I always lose my senses in your presence?"

"That's not so bad—for a beginning," said the young lady. "Go up head!"

It is to be noted that Miss Katharine Vaughn had caught from her artist brother a certain pictorial vivacity of language which often came perilously close to the verge of slang. But her lover was under the spell, as a lover should be, and he was ready to pick up for a pearl or a ruby whatever might fall from her lips.

"I do wish you could just hear those girls talk," she went on: "sometimes I can't even get in a word edgewise."

"Not even a sharp one?" he inquired, smiling.

"Now, that isn't fair, Paul. Indeed, it is really unkind! Have I ever said a sharp word to you?" And she looked at him appealingly.

"My dear Kitty," he hastened to protest, "I didn't mean to insinuate——"

"If you didn't mean it, why did you do it?" she retorted. "That's what Madame Parlier used to say to us at school. You didn't know me, Paul, when I was in the graduating class at Madame Parlier's Institute for Young Ladies! French is the Language of the School. I was a gay young thing in those days. I was a terror, I tell you."

The young man to whom she made this strange assertion looked at her laughing face and expressed his disbelief in the possibility of her terrifying anybody.

"Ah, but I did, I assure you," she insisted. "And I had one trick that just staggered Madame Parlier: I used to translate slang into French. Sometimes she really strained herself trying to guess what I meant by saying, *Eh bien, je sourirais*, and *Cela prend le gâteau*. We did have dead loads of fun sometimes."

"Did Madame Parlier have dead loads of fun also?" asked Stuyvesant. "I suppose she was like the frog in the fable: what was fun to you was death to her."

"We didn't kill her. She is as fat and as jolly as ever. I go to see her two or three times a year. She always asks me if we are keeping up our studies. Last time I saw her, she asked if I could speak Italian yet, and I answered that I couldn't exactly speak *Italian*, but I could still dance the *German*. I think that puzzled her a little. There's lots of fun in the world if you go around looking for it."

Stuyvesant intimated that he had no need to go around in search of enjoyment as long as he might be with her.

"But you can't be with me long. I've got to go and dress. I must look like a fright now——"

Stuyvesant tried to protest.

"Oh, I know what you will say," she interrupted, "but then you are only a man. Girls are more critical about clothes and bonnets and gloves and things; and I am going into a whole roomful of girls. Why, I'd rather face ten men than two girls!"

"No doubt!" said Stuyvesant, dryly.

She looked at him with a pretty little smile of reproach, under the influence of which he made a movement as though to kiss her again.

"Oh, no," she said, with dignity; "you have just insulted me, and I cannot allow you to embrace me—until you have apologized."

He hastened to apologize as she commanded, and peace was speedily restored.

"I really must send you away now, Paul," she said, at last. "I have lots to do before I go to the grabiola. I haven't had a minute to myself all day, and I shan't have. You needn't smile,—just as if you men did all the work and we women were mere idlers."

Stuyvesant inquired what it was which had kept her so busy.

"Well, at nine o'clock this morning I had to be at the Industrial School——"

"To learn industry?" he asked, hastily.

"To teach poor children how to sew," she answered. "Incidentally they learn *manners* also; and if you would like to take lessons, perhaps you had better apply for admission."

Stuyvesant laughed lightly as she made this quick return.

"And what else have you done to-day?" he asked.

"At half-past ten I went to Mrs. Duncan's, where our Shakespeare Club met. Gladys Tennant and I read two acts of 'As you Like it.'"

"Do you know why you remind me of Rosalind?" he asked.

"I suppose she was good-looking," she replied, pertly.

"That's not the reason."

"Then what is it?"

"Because," Stuyvesant answered, "I can say of you what Orlando said of Rosalind. You are 'just as high as my heart.'"

"Really, Paul," she said, rising, "as long as you say pretty things like that I shall hate to turn you out. But I must dress now, or I'm sure to be late. I'll be good to you, though. You can come back for me—let's see: after lunch I've got to go to a rehearsal of the *Kinder-Symphonie* we are getting up for our fair. You know the fair we have every year in our church to help the Society for the Supply of Missionaries to Cannibal Countries?"

Stuyvesant acknowledged that he had heard of the fair and of the Society.

"Then I'm going to the New York Hospital after the rehearsal," she continued. "You can come at half-past four and walk there with me."

"What on earth takes you to the Hospital?" was Stuyvesant's surprised inquiry.

"You will take me there,—if you come for me in time," was her answer.

"I mean, why are you going there?"

"To read to the children. A lot of us girls have agreed to go twice a week, and it's my turn this afternoon. The Bishop of Tuxedo suggested it to us, just before he went West."

"Isn't the Bishop of Tuxedo still here?" Stuyvesant asked, at once recalling her brother's excuse for breaking his next morning's appointment.

"He started on Monday, I think," was her reply.

"And isn't he going to be back soon?"

"Not unless you call three months soon," she answered. "He told us last Sunday he was going on a sort of tour of inspection as far as California."

"Are you certain that he has gone?"

"Yes: one of the girls at the sewing-school this morning said that she had seen him driving down to the ferry. She didn't say whether it was Monday or Tuesday; but it was early in the week."

"And he will not be in town here to-morrow?" Stuyvesant asked the question with the vain hope that perhaps Charley had not deceived him.

"Of course he won't be here to-morrow. Didn't I tell you he was going West, young man, to grow up with the country?"

He did not answer her. It was with a shock that he discovered that Charley Vaughn had invented the reason for breaking the appointment. Under other circumstances, he would not have thought twice about the matter; he would have accepted the artist's elaborate excuse as an ingenious fiction intended merely to hide the real reason. But now, since he had seen the name of James Burt on the back of the check given to Charles Vaughn, Stuyvesant was strangely suspicious. He was in the frame of mind in which a man is ready to twist things innocent enough in themselves into a startling semblance of wrong. He was conscious of this himself, and he tried to throw off the cloak of doubt and distrust which enveloped him.

"Have you seen Charley to-day?" he asked, as Katharine Vaughn came with him to the head of the stairs.

"I've only seen him twice this week," she answered. "And I wish he'd come oftener, for I don't think he's at all bright just now."

So she had noticed it too, thought Stuyvesant.

"I don't know what's the matter with him," she continued. "At first I'd an idea that he might be in love. I didn't like that at all, for of course I had meant to pick out the girl myself that Charley was to marry."

"Do you think that is what's the matter with him?" Stuyvesant asked, eagerly, hoping that some simple and natural reason, like this, might suffice to explain the change in Charley's manner which both his sister and his friend had noticed.

"I don't know," she answered. "Charley in love would be a funny sight, wouldn't it? You might sell tickets at the door, and that alone would be worth the entire price of admission. You know that he is odd enough as it is, in some ways. I don't know what to think about it. He's always talking about his best girl and his second-best girl; but he has never told me who his best girl is. That's very suspicious, isn't it?"

Stuyvesant asked whether she had noticed that her brother was attentive to any particular young lady.

"He's attentive to them all, you know: that's just the trouble," was her reply; "he's so amusing they all dote on him. Perhaps he has been more taken with Gladys Tennant than any one else; but I haven't seen them together anywhere lately, and Gladys never talks about him. But you remember how they flirted together that night at your theatre-party?"

Stuyvesant reminded her that he had met Miss Tennant only once, when she had been invited by Kitty to the theatre-party and to the following supper. Then he asked her if she thought that her brother was really interested in the young lady.

"Oh, I don't know," was the reply. "I thought he was beginning to take notice; but I wouldn't bet big money on it—as he would say."

"Is she interested in him?" he asked next.

"I don't know about that, either," she answered. "Of course she's a girl and doesn't let on how she feels or what she thinks. She's been flirting lately with Jack Dobbin—you know that little Frenchified dude who went to Paris a year or two ago as Johnny Dobbin and came back this fall with an imported accent, now calls himself Monsieur Jacques d'Auban, and says his ancestor drew a long bow at the battle of Poitiers. When he told me that, I wanted to tell him that he was following in the family footsteps—and drawing a long bow now. But I mustn't stay here chattering to you, or I shall be late at the grabiola."

They were standing at the top of the stairs as she said this, but Stuyvesant seemed in no hurry to descend them.

"Be off with you!" she cried, as she saw that he made no movement to go.

"I'm not in a hurry," he remarked, calmly.

"But I am. Where are you going now?"

"Wherever you wish me to go."

"Then run down to Maiden Lane and tell them to hurry up that tennis-racket of mine you took to be restrung. We are going to play twice a week during Lent. You can report about it when you come here at half-past four to take me to the Hospital. And go at once, or I shall be late at my lunch."

Probably Miss Katharine Vaughn was a little late at that lunch, since it was set for one o'clock and the factory-whistles were shrilly announcing that hour when Paul Stuyvesant left her house.

CHAPTER V.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT GOES DOWN-TOWN.

BUT it was half-past one by the broad dial of Trinity Church when Stuyvesant turned into Broadway from Maiden Lane, having attended to Miss Vaughn's commission. He stood for a moment on the corner irresolutely. He had nothing to do and nowhere to go until the time came to call again on her. Having begun the day by oversleeping himself, he had given himself up to laziness; and he knew that he would accomplish little or nothing even if he should summon up energy to return to his apartments, where the incomplete manuscript of "A History of Circumstantial Evidence" lay reproachfully on his desk.

He glanced up and down the busy thoroughfare, from which gangs of swarthy laborers were rapidly removing the snow now trodden into a dark mire. The sun shone brightly, and the sharp breeze made him button his coat and again put on his seal-skin gloves, which he had pocketed while inquiring about the tennis-racket in an overheated store. The bracing atmosphere invited a walk, and Stuyvesant turned his footsteps to the Battery, always a favorite loitering-place of his. He was descended from the New-Yorkers who once had dwelt in the stately houses which lined that now sadly disfigured bit of green by the edge of the water. He was one of the sentimentalists who regretted that the pressure of business had driven every private residence away from the best spot for a dwelling on all the island of Manhattan. It was always a pleasure to him to pace the broad path above the sea-wall and to look across the blue waters of the great bay, with its unceasing panorama of ship and steamboat, tug and man-of-war.

And yet, long before he reached the Battery, Stuyvesant stayed his feet and turned aside. As he came almost in front of Trinity Church, he suddenly recollected that the office of Eliphalet Duncan was in the Bowdoin Building, No. 76 Broadway. Ever since he had seen Duncan's endorsement after James Burt's on the check he had given to Charley Vaughn, Paul had a desire to meet the lawyer and to ask him—well, he did not know exactly what it was he wanted to ask his friend. He could not get Charley Vaughn out of his mind. Even the image of Kitty, vivid as it was usually, was obscured by that of her brother. Who was the M. Zalinski to whom Charley had given

the check? And what was his connection with the James Burt whom Duncan was defending for having burglars' tools in his possession?

So it was that when Stuyvesant came in front of the building where Duncan's office was, he entered it; and the elevator soon deposited him opposite the door which bore his friend's name.

But Mr. Duncan was not in, so the clerk told him. Mr. Duncan had returned from a reference a quarter of an hour before, and he had only just gone out to lunch. Would Mr. Stuyvesant wait for him?—he would probably return in a few minutes.

Mr. Stuyvesant would not wait for him, because Mr. Stuyvesant thought he knew where he would find him without waiting.

In one of the small streets, almost under the shadow of Trinity steeple, there is a quaint little old house. It is indeed one of the oldest houses in New York, for it was built when New York was yet New Amsterdam. It was once the house of a Dutch burgher transplanted to the New World, where he had sought to reproduce the comfort to which he had been accustomed in his native land. It was now decayed and worn with years; its timbers were rotting at last, and its floors were uneven. It had been patched and braced up and treated with reverent care; but it was a very old house, and its time was soon to be completed. It was now occupied as a chop-house. Within its dusky parlor, with its heavily-cobwebbed ceiling and its cleanly-sanded floor, the New-Yorker came for his mid-day meal. The fare which could be had there was simple and excellent. A chop, off the grill, a baked potato, a kidney, a fresh mushroom, a porter-house steak,—these were luxuries obtainable at Tom's as they were to be had nowhere else in America. The place was called Tom's. Who Tom was, or rather who he had been, and where he had lived, and where he had gone,—these were all questions which the frequenters of Tom's forbore to ask, well knowing that they could get no answer. The present proprietor was a portly Englishman who had once been an actor. Such at least he was wont to boast himself to a new customer after a second mug of his own half-and-half. An inquisitive reporter had, after a long and difficult search, succeeded in finding the play-bill of a performance of the "School for Scandal" at old Wallack's Theatre on Broadway near Broome Street, on which Mr. Hodges's name appeared as the impersonator of Lady Sneerwell's servant. Whatever Mr. Hodges's histrionic faculty or his theatrical reputation might be, before he "retired to private life to keep a public house," no one could dispute the quality of the refreshment he offered to his customers; and in consequence the two small rooms which constituted the ground-floor of the little old house were always inconveniently crowded from half-past eleven to half-past two, six days out of seven. What became of Tom's on Sunday, or where Mr. Hodges spent that day of rest, no man ever thought to ask.

It was here, in the little parlor of Tom's, that Stuyvesant thought he might find his friend. And here he found him, just about to begin on a kidney fresh from the gridiron. At the moment Paul entered the room the seat opposite to Eliphalet Duncan's was vacated by a robust stock-broker, who put on a showy overcoat and strode forth with a

stately step which made the little old house shake to its foundations.

Stuyvesant slipped into the vacant seat, saying nothing, and waiting until Duncan should look up. At last the lawyer raised his mug of ale to his mouth and his eyes were lifted from his plate.

"Paul Stuyvesant!" he cried, in surprise. "How the deuce did you get in?"

"Through the door," answered Stuyvesant. "Is thy servant a spook, that he should glide in through the wall or pass up through the floor?"

"Now you are here, and however you got here, have some lunch," said the lawyer.

"I breakfasted late, and I have no appetite; but a kidney like the one on your plate would tempt Lucullus after his banquet."

Stuyvesant did not really want anything to eat. What he sought was an excuse for sitting down with Duncan, in the hope that the course of conversation might so turn that he could twist in an allusion to James Burt and thus lead up to an inquiry as to M. Zalinski. To ask outright about either of them would force him to declare the reason why he wanted the information; and he was not willing to mention Charley Vaughn's name carelessly. He did not want to confess, even to himself, how anxious he was to free his own mind from the strange doubts which clouded it.

He knew that there was no need to explain his presence to his friend. Stuyvesant and Duncan had studied law together, and they had kept up their friendly relationship as they advanced in years. It was not unusual for the man who was teaching law to drop in to see the man who was practising it. More than once before had Stuyvesant pursued Duncan to Tom's and lingered there with him over a little lunch.

"Do you know anything about pictures?" asked Duncan, rather abruptly, after they had discussed two or three of the minor topics of the day.

"I refuse to commit myself to a confession of complete ignorance," answered Stuyvesant.

"Of course," said Duncan. "But I doubt if you know much more about them than I do."

"That depends on how much you know."

"I don't know enough to make one; and yet I used to think I was destined for an artist," Duncan continued. "When I was a boy I was always dabbling with a paint-box. I remember that I worked on a water-color for two weeks once, and I was very proud of my success. It represented a cow feeding in a meadow. I thought it wasn't bad, considering. I even ventured to take it to a real artist for his opinion: he studied it for a minute or two, and then he said, 'The yacht is all well enough, but the water is too green.' And I have never touched a brush since."

Stuyvesant laughed, and asked why his friend's thoughts had been turning again to art.

"Because of that despatch in the paper this morning," the lawyer

answered, "about the stealing of that picture by Titian. There's a thing I cannot understand."

"What is there so extraordinary about it?" asked Stuyvesant.

"That any one should have stolen it at all; that's what's extraordinary."

"But isn't the picture very valuable?"

"Of course," replied Duncan; "but what good will that do the thief? He can't sell it. Nobody will buy it. Every man in the world who knows that that picture is more valuable than a tea-store chromo knows also this morning that it has been stolen."

"I see," said Stuyvesant. "You mean that the thief cannot profit by his theft."

"That is just what I do mean. He might as well have stolen the Koh-i-noor, for all the good it will do him."

"I should think the stealing of the Koh-i-noor even a safer enterprise and more likely to pay," Stuyvesant returned, "because a big diamond can be broken up, just as silver can be melted down."

"Of course," said Duncan. "And that is what puzzles me. Why did any man run the risk of prison to take that which is of no use to him? That floors me, I confess. Problems of criminal psychology have a strange fascination for me, and I like to grapple with them resolutely. I have been turning this one over and over ever since I read the news at breakfast, and I am just as far from a solution as ever."

"This is not the first time a picture has been cut from the frame and carried off," suggested Stuyvesant.

"There have been other instances, I know; but that doesn't help me to an explanation," Duncan rejoined. "Sometimes it has been done from malice, sometimes with the hope of a reward for the return of the stolen goods; and sometimes, I think, the real cause has been some sort of pictorial monomania on the part of the thief."

"A strange madness that would be," Stuyvesant commented.

"Of course," said Duncan; "and yet not so very strange. That a man should be so taken with a picture—so fascinated by it, so overpowered by its beauty—that he should steal it, to have it always at his command, even though he could never show it to any other human eye,—that I can understand. I have enough of the artist in me to understand that."

Stuyvesant looked up seriously.

"Do you mean to say," he said, "that you believe that a man might be led to steal a picture simply out of sheer artistic appreciation of its beauties, merely to have it in his possession where he could see it at will, and yet knowing that he could never show it to any one else?"

"That's exactly what I do believe," answered Duncan. "Such things have happened. Such a thing may have happened in this case. Indeed, the longer I think about it, the more inclined I am to believe that this Mary Magdalen of Titian has been stolen by some enthusiastic admirer of Titian's painting—"

"Like Charley Vaughn," said Stuyvesant, smiling at the idea.

"Like Charley Vaughn," repeated Duncan; "and Charley, being

an enthusiast about Titian, is likely to be acquainted with others as enthusiastic as he is. Perhaps he could guess who the thief was. If the picture doesn't turn up soon, I'll have a chat with Charley, and maybe we can give the police a clue or two."

"I can see that the motive you suggest is just possible," remarked Stuyvesant, "but it does not seem probable. Your other explanation, that perhaps the picture had been taken to hold for a ransom, strikes me as far more plausible."

"Of course," said Duncan, "it is more plausible; but, for all that, I think the other is quite as likely to be the right explanation."

"Is it absolutely impossible for the thief to dispose of a picture as well known as this Titian?" asked Stuyvesant.

"Absolutely impossible," replied Duncan, "or at least I should say so, if I did not know what extraordinary things a receiver of stolen goods is sometimes willing to buy. Perhaps you know that a certain amount of criminal business has come into our office lately. I don't like it altogether, but it has been almost forced on us, in a way I need not stop now to explain. Indeed, I am not quite sorry, for I have been able to stop one or two rather high-handed proceedings of the police."

As Duncan paused, Stuyvesant wished he knew exactly how to bring in the name about which he wanted to inquire. The conversation was taking just the turn he had hoped for; and he felt that it would be his own fault if he left Tom's without the information he was seeking. Before he could find the words which would do what he wanted, Duncan saved him the trouble.

"We've had for a client lately," said the lawyer, "a notorious old 'fence,' as they call a receiver of stolen goods. I have had to defend him on a charge which the police trumped up against him. No doubt he had been guilty of many other offences, but of the particular offence which they charged against him he was innocent, as it happened. And in the course of my interviews with him, when I was preparing his defence, I got an inside view of his business, and I learnt not a few of the tricks of the trade. Why, Zalinski told me once——"

"Zalinski?" interrupted Stuyvesant. "Michael Zalinski?"

"Of course," replied Duncan; "his name is Michael. But what do you know about him?"

"And he is a receiver of stolen goods?" pursued Stuyvesant.

"A 'fence,' if you prefer the phrase," was the answer.

"Is he an accomplice of James Burt's?" asked Stuyvesant.

"Now, what, in the name of common sense, do you know about James Burt?" was Duncan's astonished demand.

In answer, Stuyvesant took out his pocket-book and drew from it the cancelled check he had given to Charley Vaughn. He showed it to Duncan, and then, turning it over, he drew the lawyer's attention to the endorsements:

Charles Vaughn.

M. Zalinski.

James Burt.

Eliphalet Duncan.

"So that's where you picked up the name, is it? I remember the check well enough," Duncan said. "Burt paid it to me as a retainer."

"I surmised as much," Stuyvesant interjected: "they are accomplices, I suppose, Zalinski and Burt,—'pals' you call them, I believe?"

"They are close friends, certainly," Duncan answered. "It was Zalinski who persuaded me to take up Burt's case in spite of my distaste for criminal practice."

"And what manner of man is this M. Zalinski?" asked Stuyvesant, conscious of not a little constraint.

"He's an odd fish,—a Polish Jew, I think, and not yet wholly Americanized. He has his good points and his bad,—like the rest of us. One of his peculiarities is that he keeps no bank-account, although he is making money hand-over fist. If he gets a check he pays it out again as soon as he can. That's the way I came to get this check of yours. Charley gave it to Zalinski, and he passed it along to Burt as soon as he could—"

"In full payment for stolen goods, I suppose, and no questions asked?" suggested Stuyvesant.

"Perhaps, and perhaps not," Duncan answered. "He may have lent Burt the money, or even given it to him outright: there's no knowing. The two men are thick as 'thieves in Vallombrosa,' to use a merry jest of Charley's."

"Does Charley know this burglar of yours?" inquired Stuyvesant, with an affectation of levity.

"How should he?" returned Duncan, in surprise.

"I thought that he might, perhaps," Stuyvesant explained, feebly.

"Of course," Duncan continued, "for all I know, Charley may be an intimate friend of my burglar, as you call him: I can't say. But he has had dealings with Zalinski more than once, I'm sure."

"How do you know that?" asked Stuyvesant, with an increasing sense of dangerous discovery.

"Because Zalinski has twice given me checks drawn to his order by Charley," the lawyer replied.

Stuyvesant looked at him in astonishment.

"Do you mean to say," he managed to inquire, at last, "that this check of mine is not the first that has come to you bearing the signatures of both M. Zalinski and Charles Vaughn?"

"I think it is the third," his friend answered: "the other two were Charley's own checks, drawn to Zalinski's order and by him endorsed over to me as part of my fees."

Stuyvesant wanted to ask Duncan if he could suggest any reason why Charley should pay money to a receiver of stolen goods. The question framed itself in his mind, but it stuck in his throat. He could not bring himself to ask it. He was not willing to excite Duncan's suspicion by any untoward inquiry.

He looked up at Duncan with an anxious glance of examination. Although he dared not inquire, he wondered how the lawyer explained to himself the strange conjunction of the artist, the "fence," and the burglar. Stuyvesant himself had no explanation to offer: he was wholly at a loss. He did not know what to think. That his own

check given to Charley should have passed into the hands of Zalinski was remarkable enough. That Charley should twice before have paid Zalinski money was even more extraordinary.

Before Stuyvesant could invent a plausible method of pursuing the conversation and adroitly eliciting Duncan's opinion on the transaction, a single stroke from the steeple of Trinity declared that it was half-past two. The lawyer rapped on the table.

"You must excuse me, Paul," he said, as the waiter came up, "but I have an appointment with a client in a quarter of an hour."

"I must be off myself," returned Stuyvesant, rising as though he were in a hurry, his mental trouble communicating itself to his body.

Duncan paid the waiter, and the two friends wended their way out of Tom's and turned toward Broadway.

In that busy thoroughfare, at the head of Wall Street, perhaps half-past two is the busiest hour of all the twenty-four. Crowds of hurrying men pushed past the two friends, surging ahead as though they had lost half an hour in the morning and believed that it might be overtaken and recaptured if only they were sufficiently energetic and persistent.

In the midst of the crossing and scattering throng it was impossible for Stuyvesant to continue the conversation in the tone he wished for. And yet before they came to a stop at the broad white marble steps of the Bowdoin Building, where Duncan had his office, Stuyvesant had managed to express his curiosity about Zalinski so as to lead the lawyer to tell him just where the receiver of stolen goods lived. It was in Bleecker Street, about two blocks west of Broadway.

After a few words of hasty farewell, they shook hands, and Duncan went into the building before which they were standing.

As soon as his friend had gone, Stuyvesant took out one of his cards and wrote down the exact number of M. Zalinski's place of business.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT INSPECTS BLEECKER STREET.

STUYVESANT had abundant subject for thought as he pursued his course northward along Broadway, walking briskly to keep his blood in circulation until a car should overtake him. Michael Zalinski was a "fence,"—a receiver of stolen goods,—a man of a class which Paul knew as having an existence in every great city, in common with the burglar, the bunco-man, and the lawless element generally, but with which he had never come into contact personally. Of the manners and the habits of men of this class he was as profoundly ignorant as he might be of the daily life of the ichthyosaurus. And yet he was going to meet this strange being, familiar enough in the abstract, but curiously unfamiliar in the concrete. He was going to beard this undescribed lion in his den; and he had the street and number of the den pencilled on a card in his pocket. How this pariah of Bleecker Street would receive him, what he would be like, how much or how

little a member of presumably so secretive a profession would be disposed to tell, and how much or how little of his communication would be worthy of credit, Paul did not know.

It was a singularly distasteful mission, this on which he was bent. At bottom, Stuyvesant was essentially an aristocrat, and there was not a little daintiness in his proclivities. He abhorred the contact of mud, moral or material: it was not that the idea of mud was especially repugnant to him, but that he disliked to touch it. As an amateur he enjoyed a bit of detective work. It was a real pleasure to him to analyze motives, and to set in motion the springs of action, filtering another man's probable train of thought through his own logical mind, and noting along what road this train would reasonably run. He admired the skill of Gaboriau's detectives, although he recognized that the problems they encountered were invented only to be solved. Probably it was an unacknowledged taste in this direction which had led him to adopt the fallacies of circumstantial evidence as the subject of his first book. But this was little more than a clever man's satisfaction in the successful piecing together of an ingenious puzzle. Paul's mind followed Lecoq willingly enough through slums and haunts into which Paul himself would never have dreamed of taking his body. And yet he was now on his way to the shop—the house—the lair—how should it be termed?—of a "fence."

An up-town car came rattling along just then, the driver's whistle and the conductor's bell chiming forth together in the vain endeavor to induce an obdurate truck just ahead to pull aside off the track. Paul pushed his way through the crowd on the back platform and entered the car. He was greeted with the universal scowl of welcome which every new-comer in a public conveyance has a right to expect. He muttered his perfunctory apology to the old gentleman who had tripped him up with his umbrella; and by a frantic clutch at a strap and an exertion of unusual agility he saved himself from falling when the car started again. He hung to the roof of the vehicle in as complete a state of comfort and security as any New-York street-passenger may hope to attain. And now, having paid the conductor and declined the wares of several news-boys, he was at leisure to think again. He had made up his mind to see Zalinski from the moment that Duncan had mentioned the man's name and business. It was an unpleasant interview to look forward to; but for Charley's sake Paul was ready to do things more unpleasant than this. With this strange man Charley seemed to be mixed up somehow, just how or why Paul did not know, and he scarcely dared conjecture.

The connection of a "fence" with the outside world, so Paul argued, must needs be twofold. The receiver of stolen goods is the manager of the jobbing and commission house of crime. Like other commission houses, it must buy from the producer to sell to the consumer. Therefore he will pay money to the one and receive it from the other. James Burt, the house-breaker, is a producer; that is plain enough; and nothing was more natural than that Zalinski should pay him money,—Charley's check, for instance. This reasoning was a sensible relief to Stuyvesant's mind. Of course he did not suspect Charley of anything

wrong; he would have scoffed at any one who should have suggested that he might come to believe that the young artist was guilty of any evil; yet it was a relief to remember that because a man pays money to a receiver of stolen goods there is no reason to suppose that he has been selling plunder. Unless—

"Bleecker—r—r!"

A fat woman, with two small children and a large basket, struggled to her feet. The conductor, having awakened the echoes of the car with his stentorian announcement, relapsed into indifference. The fat woman made frantic gestures, and the car rolled on. Stuyvesant gave the bell-strap a vicious jerk, and proceeded to thread his mazy way out. The conductor scowled at him, and muttered something that sounded like "Fresh!" the passengers who had further to go glared indignantly at the man who had presumed to interrupt their journey, as the car slowed up and stopped about the middle of the block; and Paul descended into a neatly-assorted compound of mud and water.

As he reached the curb-stone he looked back and saw the fat woman still standing on the platform and gesticulating angrily as she pointed to the miniature lake in the midst of which the car had halted. The two children, more aquatic in their habits, or more indifferent to dirt, were paddling gleefully to the side-walk. They shrieked with laughter as they watched "granny a-givin' it to the kinductor," but their triumph was short-lived, for that autocrat quietly pulled the bell-strap and the car proceeded. Thus was a family-party broken up.

Stuyvesant turned and retraced his steps to Bleecker Street, while the youngsters, yelling like Comanches, raced along the side-walk, evidently bent on keeping pace with the car till the next block, where they expected to reclaim their relative.

By name Stuyvesant knew Bleecker Street well enough, but it is one of those mid-way streets, neither up-town nor down-town, with which a great many well-informed New-Yorkers are hopelessly unfamiliar. As it debouched on Broadway, it was not amiss; two large stores occupied the corners, and if they had fronts on Bleecker Street they had fronts on Broadway also, and seemed determined to live up to the pretensions of that renowned thoroughfare. The first glance at the street which Mr. Zalinski had selected as his residence was satisfactory enough; but before Paul had taken many steps westward he changed his opinion.

What was the matter with the street? It would have puzzled him to say. Dirty it certainly was; but a dirty street is not so uncommon in New York as of itself to create a prejudice. The houses were mostly substantial and old-fashioned buildings, now apparently a little run to seed, but no more than was natural in a region left so far behind by the march of fashion. Cleaned and painted and repaired, many of them would not have disgraced an up-town street; but here they looked tawdry and out of place despite the dignity of their architecture. Paul thought that they had something of the incongruous effect of magnificent rings on a coarse and dirty hand.

Another thing struck him as not a little unusual. While he walked along, running over the numbers as he passed them, he could not fail

to remark that most of the doors stood open. This was peculiar, on a wintry day; to a man of Paul's ideas, it was peculiar at any time. Neither did these open doors all belong to drinking-saloons; and this reflection caused him to observe that there certainly was a superabundance of sample-rooms,—as we Americans are wont to call them euphemistically. Neither were all houses with the open doors restaurants of a certain class, though it was undeniable that, on the whole, there was a plethora of restaurants of a certain class. Neither were they all pawnbrokers' shops, although in his short walk Stuyvesant had already passed two of these exchanges of poverty and could see the three gilded balls of a third, glimmering in the wintry sunshine, ahead of him. There seemed to be no other business transacted than that of eating, drinking, and making temporary loans on personal property. A street-car passed along, but it did not halt either to take up or set down passengers. There were a great many children in the street, and a select contingent of these followed him at a short distance with audible comments. Evidently a tall man with a handsome overcoat and seal-skin gloves was an unfrequent sight in that part of Bleecker Street.

Paul found himself wondering whether Charley often had occasion to visit this quarter in the course of his mysterious dealings with Zalinski, and, if so, whether the place was as odd and foreign and as unsavory to the artist as it was to the lawyer. Perhaps he might meet Charley when he reached his destination. On second thoughts he acknowledged that this was unlikely. Then he fell to wondering what Zalinski's store or office might be like. Did the "fence" carry on his nefarious operations behind one of those open doors, almost on the sidewalk, so to speak, or did he lurk in an attic room secured by bolts and bars and accessible only under proper introduction and by the aid of a whispered pass-word? The latter seemed the more likely supposition; and if it were right, how was he, Paul Stuyvesant, to gain admittance? He might use Charley's name; but he was determined that this should be a last resort. How Charley had gained his introduction was a question he did not like to ask himself. All was mystery and uncertainty. The only thing to be done was to wait—or rather to go on—and see.

Of course Stuyvesant had read "Oliver Twist," and he had seen the play which has been made out of it. Fagin, he assumed, was a tolerably correct portrait of a typical "fence;" but Fagin belonged to the London of half a century ago, while Zalinski belonged to the New York of to-day. A change of climate and an advance of forty years or more would naturally make many a modification in Fagin.

These mental queries were idle, he confessed to himself, for he would soon know what manner of man Zalinski might be. There were only two more numbers to be passed. Paul looked up. He unbuttoned his coat and refreshed his memory with another glance at the card. Here was the number. He stopped in surprise and doubt, staring hard at the house in front of him, as though he had made a mistake.

Opposite him one of the inevitable unfastened doors swung and

creaked as some one passed out. Over his head glittered the arms of Lombardy, and beneath a legend in tarnished gilding set forth—

M. ZALINSKI,

LICENSED PAWNBROKER,

LIBERAL ADVANCES ON ALL KINDS OF PERSONAL PROPERTY.

UNREDEEMED PLEDGES FOR SALE.

Stuyvesant had never bargained for this. The "fence" was bad enough, but, in a way, the pawnbroker seemed infinitely worse. Around the one had hung the halo of some sort of mystery, while the other stood boldly confessed as the licensed conductor of a shabby, sordid, and (in Paul's eyes) degraded trade. And Charley had paid this man money,—not once, nor twice, but several, perhaps many, times. And Duncan, ignoring the ostensible business altogether, had spoken of him as a "fence." Clearly, this matter was one to be investigated further.

The door swung back once more, and then hung, quivering and complaining, in its normal position, half open, half shut.

Two young men passed out. One of them was attaching a latch-key to his watch-chain as he came down the steps.

"Time's up," he remarked, with a coarse, reckless laugh.

"And it's likely to be up for a while," responded the other. "D'ye see those three balls?" and he pointed upwards. "D'ye know what they stand for?"

"Do I?" said the first speaker, somewhat bitterly. "I think I've had a good chance to learn."

"They mean that it's two to one you don't get anything out, once you put it in."

"Double the odds and it's a safe bet still," said the young man, buttoning his coat so as still to display the watch-chain. "Devil may care, for all of me. Come on: we've got the boodle now; let's go somewhere and get a ball for ourselves."

"I'm with you," replied the other, with evident alacrity.

Stuyvesant watched them as they passed down the street until the nearest saloon swallowed them up. They had not far to go.

Then he turned again to inspect the building. It was a narrow, high-stooped, four-story house. Evidently built for a dwelling originally, no change had been deemed necessary to adapt it to its present uses. A spring, long since out of order, had been fitted to the front door; a sign had been hung above it; and that was all.

The windows were coated thick with dirt and cobwebs. The gas was lighted on the first floor and in the hall, although it was still early in the afternoon and the day was clear and bright. The whole house had a rakish, dissolute look; and most of the men and women who went in and came out as Stuyvesant stood watching were people whose habitual residence was seemingly on the shady side of Queer Street.

He walked away to the next corner and paused there for a moment. He felt an almost invincible repugnance to enter the place. It seemed

to him as if he would leave something of his self-respect behind him. What would Kitty think if she were to see him going into a low, disreputable pawn-shop or coming out of it? Then he laughed to himself, as he glanced up and down the street: it did not seem a likely promenade for a fashionable young lady.

He wished earnestly that he were fairly inside. He had a nervous dread of being seen, not by his acquaintances, but by the strangers who passed him on the street. It appeared to him that they all turned and looked at him,—which it is more than likely a good many of them did, for Paul Stuyvesant's was a personality to attract attention anywhere, and men of his stamp are scarce enough in Bleeker Street. But he felt as though they all penetrated his purpose,—as though they were saying, "There's a fellow going into the pawn-shop. First time, most likely. Don't he feel cheap about it?"

And Stuyvesant did feel cheap about it. He was fully conscious that there was nothing wrong or dishonorable in what he was about to do; he knew that even if he had been compelled to sell his watch there was nothing in the act that he had any reason to be ashamed of; and yet if he had been going to commit a theft he could not have felt more nervous and uncomfortable than he did as he ran up the steps and pushed open the creaking door. He let it fall behind him, glad to screen himself from the street, yet feeling more like a sneak than he had ever felt in his life before.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT CALLS ON M. ZALINSKI.

HE found himself in a long room, which ran the entire depth of the house, the partitions having been removed. It had a close, musty smell, in strong contrast to the keen, frosty air without. Little daylight filtered through the unwashed windows, but the place was bright enough with the garish brilliance of half a dozen flaring gas-jets. To the left of the entrance-door the view was obscured by a couple of wooden screens, which served to wall off little spaces not unlike the stalls in a confessional. These were for the transaction of business with such customers as might feel a delicacy about negotiating their loans in the bold publicity of the main shop. Paul tried each of these sanctuaries in turn, but all three of them were occupied. Then he stepped back. The door was invitingly close to him, but he had no idea of retiring. To his mind, the hardest part of the ordeal was already passed. He would go on now, at any cost, and learn what might be Charley's connection with this repulsive den.

Down the entire length of the room ran an extremely broad counter of cheaply-painted wood, stained and dirty, and worn smooth at the edges by clinging hands. The wall behind it was completely hidden by a succession of shelves filled to their utmost capacity with queer, nondescript bundles. Some of these were neatly pinned in shawls, towels, or handkerchiefs; some looked like a selection from the flotsam

of the ash-barrel; but all were duly ticketed and piled up with some appearance of order.

Near the window was a tall desk, at which sat a flashily-dressed young man with a marked Hebraic nose, balancing a pen in his hand and chewing vigorously on the end of an unlighted cigar which projected from the corner of his mouth. A gas-jet just behind him threw out his silhouette in brutal relief. A large safe, with the door partly open like the doors outside in the street, formed a shadowy recess whence the long legs of the desk and the tall office-stool emerged into the bright light of the gas-jets.

"One coat and vest,—a dollar ninety!"

The Hebraic youth bent over his desk and wrote rapidly. Paul turned sharply in the direction of the strident voice, and saw the whole long vista of the pawnbroker's shop stretching out before him in the gas-light, the package-encumbered wall, the broad brown counter, the various customers dotted along it. Poverty's exchange was doing a rushing business.

A tall and rather good-looking young man was at the receipt of custom. He had dark eyes, black, curly hair, and a shapely, erect figure. As he deftly and with a practised hand rolled up some garments into a tight bundle, the glitter of a particularly white diamond on one finger caught Paul's eye. Could this be Zalinski? he wondered; and he rather hoped it was.

"Now don't let the moths get at them," said a frowsy-looking man who had just—it is to be hoped only temporarily—relinquished possession of the coat and waistcoat.

The young man laughed lightly and pleasantly.

"We can't afford to board no moths here," he answered, as he stepped back and took two small pieces of paper from the clerk at the desk. "You'll find the goods right enough when you come to redeem them,—if you ever do," he added, in a lower tone, pinning a ticket to the bundle and adroitly tossing it into a narrow vacant place on the crowded shelves near the ceiling. Then he opened a drawer, slapped a silver dollar, three quarters, and a dime and a nickel loudly down on the counter, and pushed them across to the frowsy man along with the other ticket, on which the ink was still wet and shining through the sand that had been sprinkled on it.

"A dollar ninety," he said. "Next."

"Sure an' that's me," said a trembling voice, and a young woman took her place at the counter. Paul looked at her with interest. Under more favorable circumstances he might have thought her a pretty girl, but now, with hollow cheeks and large bright eyes, with a thin, slightly-stooped figure clad for this inclement weather in nothing better than an old calico gown, and a ragged shawl pinned across her shoulders, she seemed pathetic enough.

Stuyvesant was surprised to hear so cheery a ring in her voice as she reached the counter. But she knew well enough that she was in the last place in the world where she could expect to meet with pity. Her one chance was to enlist a little sympathy by gayety and riuillery. That even this was a forlorn hope she was fully aware; and yet she

tried it. When men or women come to their last chance they are apt to give it a trial; flesh and blood will make the attempt, even if reason is convinced that it will prove utterly vain.

"Ah, but it's well ye're lookin' the day, Mr. Zalinski,"—Paul started as he heard the name,—“an' as handsome an' fine as iver. Sure it's a treat for the poor souls that does be comin' here to have the likes of yerself to dale wid.”

The young man was evidently not averse from a few compliments. He caressed his black moustache with the diamond-decked hand, thereby at once displaying the gem and concealing a gratified smile.

"Well, Mary, you give yourself the treat pretty often. What is it to-day?"

"Only a thrifle, sir; it's——" She placed a bundle on the counter, and with nervous fingers fumbled at the knots. Stuyvesant noticed how her hand trembled and how her dark eyes were raised every moment in mute despairing appeal to the handsome, self-satisfied face of the young pawnbroker. Her pitiful attempt at humor had died out as the moment for trying her last chance had come.

Zalinski lost patience. "Come, hurry up," he said, roughly. "This isn't a thousand-dollar job of yours, I suppose. I can't waste all day over it."

There were tears in her eyes, but she managed to laugh.

"Oh, the sorra a thousand dollars, sir. Sure that's for gentlemen like you, not for the likes of me. I only want——" She hesitated as the last knot yielded to her hand. She needed so many things that she wanted the last penny she could secure as an advance, but it would be absurd to ask too much and terrible to ask too little. She spread out the contents of the bundle on the counter.

"I want—forty cents on this shawl and pair of shoes."

The poor shoes were cast back to her with quick contempt; and indeed they merited no better fate. Only despair would have brought them to such a place.

"Call those things shoes! Take them to a junk-shop. Let's see the shawl. H'm! I thought so. I wouldn't take the whole outfit as a gift. Forty cents, indeed!"

"Sure it's better nor this one I have on. Ye'll let me have a quarter on it, anyhow?"

"What d'ye take this place for? A rag-shop? Take your shawl home and cut the holes out of it and then come back and talk to me." And the young pawnbroker turned away with an indignant sniff.

"Ochone, sir, sure ye'll not be so cruel? Listen, now! My man's got a job. He goes to work Monday. Not a word of lie in it! In-dade he does; and sorra a thing is there in the house,—neither bit nor sup,—and the childer cryin',—an'——" She tore the thin shawl from her shoulders and added it to the other. "Won't ye let me have twenty-five on the two? Next week I'll redeem them. They'll be no time wid ye. Ah, look at them ag'in, Mr. Zalinski. Ye'll niver be after refusin' me?"

But the pawnbroker was not even listening to her. He had gone up to one of the more secluded compartments, whence a fairly white

hand protruded across the counter. From this hand he had just received a cluster ring, which he was now examining in every possible light. No longer did Stuyvesant take comfort from the prepossessing appearance of the man. He was sorry that this was Zalinski.

Meanwhile, the poor Irishwoman had gathered her paltry belongings from the counter slowly and reluctantly. She was weeping unrestrainedly now, and murmuring broken words below her breath. She did not attempt to make up her bundle again, but placed both shawls over her shoulders; one of them had a gaudy red pattern, and the other was a more sombre black, and as they were carelessly adjusted, and the colors of the lower one showed through the holes in the upper, the effect was bizarre. She took the shoes in her hand, and turned toward the door.

"I might have known it," she muttered; "but sure what was I to do? I couldn't sit there and listen to poor little Shaun cryin' wid the hunger! Oh, murder, murder, what's to become of us now, at all, at all?"

She wrung her hands, and the shoes dropped to the floor.

Paul had never realized the existence of poverty like this. Now and again he had given a trifle to tramps and beggars, always in violation of his principles,—for he was a sound theorist in political economy. But here was a genuine case of destitution and despair. He felt a lump rising in his throat, as he stepped forward to address the woman.

At this moment the strident tones issued their order to the automaton at the desk: "Seventy-five dollars on a cluster diamond and ruby ring."

The announcement enchained the attention of every one in the shop. Evidently the transaction was of sensational magnitude.

"What name?" was asked; and from the obscurity of the partition a female voice answered, with a little laugh,—

"Cash,—Brooklyn." And the clerk made his entry.

This pledge was not thrown up on the shelves. It was tied to its ticket and placed in the safe, which yawned a little more to receive it.

Meanwhile, Stuyvesant had found a moment to speak to the Irishwoman. He had not inquired how she happened to be reduced to such a plight; he had not asked what was her husband's business: he had merely slipped into her hand five dollars and his card.

"I am very sorry you are in such trouble," he said. "There is a trifle which may help you along till your husband gets to work. Don't be afraid; I can afford it. And if you'll let me know if there is anything further—if any accident should happen—my address is on that card. I think I know of some people who would inquire into your case and do more for you than I can."

He turned away from the poor creature's tearful, wondering thanks. Leaving her to marvel what manner of angel this might be who did good in pawn-shops, he faced the counter again. He had violated the first principle of his own code of alms-giving; he had bestowed money on an unknown woman without investigation; but his conscience acquitted him.

He caught Mr. Zalinski's eye as that worthy returned from deposit-

ing the cluster ring in the safe. The young pawnbroker at once accosted Paul, whose dress and appearance suggested another possible transaction of similar importance.

"What can I do for you, sir?" said he, politely, half leaning, half reaching across the counter with a suggestive gesture. Stuyvesant's watch-chain was visible, and from it depended a locket, and in that locket was a very good likeness of Miss Vaughn. The pawnbroker's glance seemed to have been attracted to it, and his hand indicated and in a manner invited it.

Stuyvesant hastily fastened his coat, which he had unbuttoned a moment before to reach his card-case. Having thus answered the gesture in the negative, he proceeded to answer the question in the affirmative.

"If you can spare me a moment, I will tell you. You are Mr. Zalinski, I believe?"

"That is my name," returned the young man, slightly surprised. As a rule, his customers did not trouble themselves much about his identity, being often more occupied in concealing their own.

"A week or so ago," began Stuyvesant, "just before Christmas, I suppose, you received, doubtless in the course of business, a check——" He hesitated a moment, uncertain how to proceed; but the young man behind the counter broke in impatiently:

"We receive a great many checks in the course of business. Come to the point at once. I am very busy."

"I am anxious to trace this check. It was drawn by me to the order of a friend of mine, and made payable by him to you. From you it passed to James Burt."

The pawnbroker looked at him sharply and suspiciously.

"You seem to have traced it pretty well already," he said. "I don't know any James Burt. Are you sure the check passed through my hands?"

"It was endorsed M. Zalinski; not a very common name, surely," answered Paul.

"Common or uncommon, it is not mine. My name is Isaac," was the rough reply.

"Your sign outside reads M. Zalinski," pursued Stuyvesant.

"That's my father's name. This business does not belong to me."

"Can I see your father, then?" asked Paul, eagerly. Somehow he was relieved to learn that Charley's business did not lie with this shrewd, handsome young fellow, who seemed, like his own diamond, all glitter, without a soft spot anywhere about him.

"Can you see my father?" the clerk repeated, slowly. "Well, I don't know. I'll ask him." He stepped back and took up a speaking-tube which hung down at an angle of one of the shelves and evidently communicated with the regions above. He whistled into it, and then held it to his ear waiting for a response. This was not long in coming, for the young man speedily spoke into the tube.

Stuyvesant now listened to a curious, one-sided dialogue: he could hear every word Isaac Zalinski said, but the replies from above were inaudible.

"Gentleman wants to see you a minute," was the first message intrusted to the tube. Then came a pause. The upper regions were returning their answer.

"I don't know. Something about a check."

Another pause.

"Quite the swell. Talks smooth and dresses well."

The unseen interlocutor apparently took some time to consider this description, and Paul realized that the New-York Fagin, behind his open door, was not so accessible after all.

"I don't think so. Never saw him before. Don't look as if he was on any lay," was young Zalinski's next contribution to the interview; and Stuyvesant inferred that the gentleman at the other end had endeavored to connect him with some of the crib-cracking fraternity.

After another application of the tube to his ear, the young man turned:

"Say, young fellow, you're not from Mulberry Street, are you?"

Paul did not for a moment appreciate the significance of the question.

"No; I live up-town," he answered, simply.

The other favored him with a protracted stare. "Well, there's no telling," he muttered to himself, and then sent his voice upward:

"I don't think so; hasn't that cut. I guess you'd better have it out with him anyhow." Then after a moment he dropped the tube.

"The old man'll see you in a minute," he said, and at once returned to the counter, the most eligible point of which was now occupied by an old and portly negro woman.

"Well, Aunt Hannah, what can I do for you to-day?"

There was a bulky bundle in front of the woman. It was neatly pinned up in two towels, which she now proceeded to unfasten.

"Only a trifle, honey," she said. "I hab' pressin' occasion fo' a matter ob five dollahs till Monday."

"Gig's coming up then, eh?" said the pawnbroker, with a laugh. "Well, let's have a look at the collat."

"Oh, it's a-comin' this time, shuah," said the negress, throwing back the towels. "I dreamed it, I did; an' my ole man, what's never knowed to go wrong, he dreamed it the same as I did."

She took six shirts from the bundle. Paul could see that they were of the finest quality, with initials marked in embroidery, and most beautifully washed and ironed. Zalinski counted them over carelessly and with a disparaging air.

"Give you four dollars," he said, at last.

"Foah's no manner ob use to me, honey; must hab five. Couldn't get along with foah, nohow."

"Why, four's enough to gamble away at policy in one week, isn't it? Or has washing taken a boom, that you can afford to plunge this way?" returned the young man.

Paul gasped. This woman was a laundress, and she was actually pawning some of her customers' shirts to risk the money in some obscure form of gambling!

"I tells you, chile, dis yar is shuah! an' I ain't a-gwine to go no

little contemptuous picayune stake on a shuah thing. Not for Hannah !" persisted the old woman.

"I can't advance you more than four dollars," said Zalinski, in a tone which was apparently intended to put an end to the discussion.

"Jes' as you please, chile. Please yo'self an' yo'll please me. Dis nigger knows whar she can git five dollahs for dese yar goods jes' as quick as axin'." And the old negress proceeded in a very determined manner to replace the towels.

"Oh, well," said the pawnbroker, "I'll make it four and a half for you."

"Five dollahs, sah, an' 'nough an' too much said about it," answered the woman, as she began to fasten up her bundle, taking three or four pins from her mouth, where they had seemed in no wise to stem the current of her eloquence.

Zalinski appeared to hesitate a moment, then he cried,—

"Five dollars on half a dozen cambric shirts!—You see, you're an old customer, Aunt Hannah, and I can't bear to disoblige you," he added, with a laugh.

"Dat's all well 'nough, honey; but you knows debblish well dem shirts is wuff more, an' you knows, too, that I must hab 'em out by Monday noon; fo' if I couldn't take 'em home what would the gen'l-man say? Petty larceny! that's what he'd say! an' I'se an honest woman, that's what I am! an' I'se got a character I won't lose for no half-dozen shirts an' no five dollahs, nor no such trifin' matter. That's me!"

Meanwhile, Paul was plunged in a most unpleasant doubt as to whether his own proper shirts—and he was very particular about his linen—ever passed through an experience like this. He employed a colored washerwoman, and he had never troubled his head to inquire what might be the fate of this personal property from the day he took it off till the day he donned it again. It gave him a cold chill to reflect on the possibility that his shirts might have spent some of the intervening time in such an establishment as this. His laundress lived up-town, it was true, in one of the streets off Sixth Avenue, as well as he could remember, but then there were pawn-shops everywhere, and policy-playing was not confined to any particular locality.

A shrill whistle broke the thread of these unpleasant reflections. He looked up. The sound had come from the tube.

The young pawnbroker was in the act of slapping down five silver dollars and a ticket before the negress, with whose estimate of her own honesty Paul could not agree. He looked up and caught Stuyvesant's eye, then he nodded.

"That's the old man," he said. "He'll see you now. Go out in the passage and go up one flight of stairs. Room over this, second floor front."

Stuyvesant went out silently; and, following these directions, he soon found himself in front of a closed door at the end of an extremely dark passage. He knocked.

"Come in," said a voice; and he entered.

The room was small, and as dirty, apparently, as the rest of the

house. The gas was not ablaze here, although the two windows admitted but little light through their thick incrustation of grime and cobwebs. The apartment was simply furnished. There was no carpet on the floor. In front of each window stood a massive safe, serving to obscure the lower panes altogether; and perhaps the absolutely phenomenal dirtiness of the upper panes was due to the inaccessibility thus caused. A very handsome desk with a cylinder top occupied the space between these safes; and with two chairs it constituted the entire furniture. Ornaments there were none, unless two confused heaps of japanned tin boxes, such as one sees in a lawyer's office, might pass for such. These stood, in no particular order, some upside down, some on their sides, and some in a normal position, on each side of the door.

As Stuyvesant entered, the sole occupant of the room, who was seated at the desk, spun nimbly round in his revolving chair, and faced him:

"Vell, sir, and vot is it I shall haf the bleasure to do mit you?"

The speaker was a man who might be anywhere between fifty and seventy years of age. His thin hair and straggling beard, though streaked with gray, were still dark; and the heavy eyebrows, which came down low over his eyes and nearly met between them, were as black as jet. But his face, as Paul could observe, even in the dim half-light which prevailed, was a perfect net-work of wrinkles; and a curious twitch which elevated one side of his upper lip at short intervals, after the manner of a snarling dog, whether arising from habit or from infirmity, added a very peculiar character to the man's expression. Though he had evidently been writing when Stuyvesant entered, and though the light was so poor, he did not wear glasses. His eyes, set close together, and seemingly almost joined by the peculiarity of the brows, were extraordinarily brilliant and piercing. The whole countenance was striking, and not altogether agreeable; and there was no trace of the good looks which were visible in the young man down-stairs.

By nature and habit Stuyvesant was a quick observer, and he had seen all that there was to see at a glance. He drew the only remaining chair closer to the desk, and settled himself in it, without waiting for an invitation. It was then that he first noticed the convulsive snarl of the other's lip.

"Mr. Zalinski," he began, "I will not waste more of your time by apologizing for my presence than I am compelled to use. I want to ask you if you know anything of a Mr. Charles Vaughn?"

"I thought it vos apout a sheck you came?"

The old man spoke very rapidly, and with a marked foreign accent, not exactly German, but not unlike it. Paul had some little difficulty in disentangling his meaning from the thick, guttural tones, with their strange inflection and hurried enunciation.

"I am led to make this visit owing to a check of mine which I paid to Mr. Vaughn, and which has returned to me with your endorsement—and that of others upon it."

"Vos the sheck nicht goot?" asked Zalinski, quickly.

"Perfectly good," answered Paul. "It was my own check. I

only wished to know, as a matter of curiosity and to satisfy myself, how Charles Vaughn happened to pay it over to you?"

"Hein! und dot vos it all, eh? Und bray vill you dell to me—for guriosity und zatisfaction, as you zay—ish Mr. Sharley Fawn a relative mit you?"

"Not exactly," replied Paul. "At present he is only a friend, but a very dear one, and if he is in any trouble——"

Zalinski's lip twitched upward till it showed his yellow teeth as he interrupted:

"Drupple! Vot drupple? Mr. Sharley Fawn has peesness mit me,—peesness, versteht Sie? Shentlemans who haf peesness mit me don't get into no drupples."

"Not even Mr. James Burt?"

It was so palpable a chance for a hit that Stuyvesant could not forbear striking, though he regretted his precipitancy a moment after. Mr. Zalinski's heavy brows came down, and his mobile lip went up, till the rest of his face seemed to vanish between the two, and he was nothing but snarl and scowl.

"Zee here, young man,"—he rose from his chair, and towered over Stuyvesant; he was an unusually tall man, and the long-skirted frock-coat that he wore made him appear even taller,—“zee here, young man, if Shames Purt ish in drupples it has nicht to do mit me! Nicht! Versteht Sie? Un' if you give shecks to Mr. Sharley Fawn or Mr. Sharley Anypotty, you must ogspect that they will be baid away to oder beobles. If you vants to know vy dot sheck vos to me baid, go un' ask it of Mr. Sharley Fawn. I don't give away none of my gustomers' peesness——"

Paul was on his feet too. There was something threatening in the man's tone and manner.

"Mr. Vaughn is a very intimate friend of mine, and I cannot understand how he comes to have business with a person like you at all," he said.

"Hein! He ish, eh? Und you dinks you knows all apout him, eh?"

"I think I do," was Paul's unhesitating answer, though an uncomfortable conviction of the unaccountability of some of Charley's recent proceedings flashed across him as he spoke.

"Vell, I dinks you don't; und if you did, you vos a fool to waste time goming here to bump me," was the uncompromising reply. "Und I dinks dot I know a goot teal more apout Mr. Sharley Fawn as you do,—und a goot teal more as I vos a-going to dell you. So!"

"In that case, I have nothing more to detain me here, and I will wish you a good day," said Paul, turning toward the door.

"Goot tay—goot tay! Und dry und find some peesness for yourself, und maype you will let oder beoble's peesness alone." And the twitch of Mr. Zalinski's upper lip might have been mistaken for a grin of triumph as he spun round to his desk again, muttering,—

"Ikey vos right. No Mulperry Street apout him. He vos no cop; not'ing but a tem fool."

And, though Paul set no special value on Mr. Zalinski's good

opinion, the last words of that gentleman rang unpleasantly in his ears as he descended the stairs, and for once in his life he felt strangely inclined to agree with a decidedly unflattering estimate of himself.

It is not exactly pleasant to feel that you have bungled in a delicate mission and to be called a fool for your pains.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT PUTS TWO AND TWO TOGETHER.

THIS trifling wound to his self-love did not, however, rankle very deeply in Paul Stuyvesant's breast. Indeed, while the smart lasted it did him a good service. He passed out of the pawn-shop with no consciousness of the morbid hesitation he had felt at his entrance, and in consequence he probably attracted far less attention. In the open air, the irritation arising from his unsatisfactory interview with Mr. Michael Zalinski soon evaporated, and he ceased to regard the old man save as a factor in the problem he had undertaken to solve.

Reviewing the situation calmly, Stuyvesant was forced to the conclusion that there had been passages of some kind between the pawnbroker and his future brother-in-law which neither party cared to explain. He wished he had been more explicit with Charley when the latter had called on him that morning; but, after all, at that time he had not been suspicious of anything; at most he had merely been puzzled. Now he was compelled to acknowledge that he had serious misgivings. Duncan, a shrewd, hard-headed lawyer, who had the best possible means of knowing whereof he spoke, had called Zalinski a receiver of stolen goods. The brief conversation Paul had just held with Zalinski had not tended to raise the old man in his estimation. Nor was the transaction that had been brought prominently under his own notice an isolated one. The "fence" evidently knew Charley well; indeed, it seemed to Stuyvesant as though Zalinski had hinted that he knew something of young Vaughn which no one else knew. Of course this might have arisen from bravado, or from a mere wish to be disagreeable; but somehow Stuyvesant feared there was more behind. He had the tangible fact, vouched for by Duncan, that several checks bearing Charley's signature had passed through Zalinski's hands.

Why had this money been paid? Was it hush-money? Did the pawnbroker hold any dark secret as a sword over the young man's head? And before Stuyvesant a vision of that head rose up, always erect, with smiling face and frank honest eyes. With what dark mystery could such a man as Charley Vaughn be mixed up? The thing was melodramatic and impossible.

And yet—and yet—the doubt would obtrude itself. Paul Stuyvesant had read too much and observed too much not to be ready to acknowledge that because a thing is improbable it is by no means impossible, and indeed that it is the unlikely which is most constantly occurring. In his own mind he ran over his morning's talk with Charley. The young fellow had been unlike himself; he had been

nervous and overwrought; his high spirits had been palpably forced. All this Paul had noticed before the incident of the check had made any but the faintest impression on him. And then the story about the Bishop of Tuxedo! Kitty had told him that the bishop was on his way to San Francisco: so this was a clumsily manufactured excuse. But what in the name of wonder had Michael Zalinski to do with it all?

Black-mail was a hideous word, but when once it had occurred to him Paul could not get it out of his head. If Charley had only confided in him! But then the sufferers from black-mail never confide in anybody. Like the victims of cancer, the slaves of a hideous secret will endure untold miseries to hide their agony as long as possible from even the most sympathetic friends. Paul had studied his Gaboriau closely, and in theory he knew a good deal about black-mailing.

Then his mind ran riot as to the possible nature of the secret hold which Zalinski might have on his friend. He passed in review every crime in the decalogue, and could find none to fit Charley's case with any degree of plausibility. He would as soon suspect him of murder as of petty larceny,—sooner. To do anything dishonorable was not in Charley's nature; and Paul fancied he knew that nature well. Still, the boy was warm-hearted and impulsive, and would go great lengths to serve a friend. Perhaps the key to the mystery might be found by searching in this direction. Stuyvesant did not attempt to call the roll of Charley's acquaintance: each lived his own life, and each had many friends, unknown to the other, even by name. Their circles touched only at one point; and that point was Kitty.

Poor Kitty! How proud she was of her brother, and how she loved him! Paul had once or twice suffered from the wayward temper of his promised bride, and he had solaced himself with the thought that so fond a sister could not but make an affectionate wife. He shuddered at the thought of Kitty's knowing that her brother was in any way entangled with a creature like Zalinski, or of her guessing that he was in the power of such a man. Then and there he registered a vow that he would stand between her and trouble, be the cost to him what it might.

And out of his own mental attitude, he fancied he had evolved a clue. Suppose Charley were other than he was, suppose he were a felon, or a gambler, or worse,—the degrees of guilt were a little confused in Stuyvesant's mind,—would not he, Paul, do anything, pay hush-money if need be, to keep the knowledge from Kitty? He felt that he would. Thus, having imagined a case in which he himself might be made a ready victim of black-mail, it was easy enough to believe that Charley might have become enmeshed quite as innocently.

Paul pitied the poor boy from the bottom of his heart. He resolved to help him to the uttermost. He would invite his confidence; he would suggest every means that would make the secret easier in telling, and he would pledge himself to an inviolate silence.

He resolved to go straight to Charley's studio. There was a chance of finding him there and having the matter out with him. Afterwards, if there were time, he could keep his appointment with Kitty. Yester-

day he could have imagined no duty to which he would have postponed such an engagement; but now he recognized a prior necessity. He did not forego the meeting without a pang, however, and he even looked at his watch in the hope that he might find time enough both for duty and pleasure. It was only ten minutes past three. He would be able to see Charley, and to meet Kitty afterwards. Late as he had gone out that morning, it had been a long day already: time measures itself less by minutes and seconds than by events and emotions.

He had boarded a Broadway car at Bleecker Street, and with frequent halts it was moving up-town. He would get off at Twenty-Sixth Street and go across to Charley's studio. So deeply had his mind been occupied that he had to look out to assure himself that he had not already passed that point. He was then just opposite the Star Theatre; and he laughed to himself as he found that he could not recall the circumstance of stepping on the car.

There was a halt at Fourteenth Street, and a great influx of passengers broke into the car by both doors, mostly ladies, homeward-bound from shopping-expeditions. The few vacant seats quickly were filled up, and many were left standing. Stuyvesant, always polite, rose and offered his seat to a young lady who was clinging to a strap almost in front of him. With a slight smile and a bow, she sat down, murmuring, "Thank you, Mr. Stuyvesant."

Paul had all his wits about him in a moment, and looked down at the young lady. Before he had finished a few conventional words of disclaimer to her thanks, he had taken a full mental inventory of her charms, which were neither few nor slight. She was a tall, graceful girl, with an exceptionally good figure, dark brown eyes, a nose a little tip-tilted, and ripe red lips around which a couple of dimples were playing in pursuit of a faint smile that vanished as he watched it. Her most striking feature was her hair, coiled in magnificent masses over her shapely head, silken, luxuriant, and of the color of a withered beech-leaf. She was certainly a sufficiently remarkable-looking girl, and to be remembered when once met; but Paul could not identify her. She seemed to know him; but who she might be he did not know, and he could not venture to surmise.

"How inconveniently crowded these cars always are!" he said, by way of saying something, as he looked down at the pale pretty face,—far prettier than Miss Vaughn's, by the way, although Stuyvesant would never have acknowledged that. Meanwhile, he was saying inwardly, "Now, where on earth have I met that girl? I seem to know her, too; but, for the life of me, I can't find a name or a circumstance to connect her with."

"I suppose the company likes that," she said, answering the remark that met her ears, but leaving Stuyvesant as hopelessly as ever in the dark with regard to the question that was troubling his mind.

"I suppose so," he said, awkwardly enough; and then there was a pause, which the conductor, pursuing fares under difficulties, enlivened by treading squarely on Stuyvesant's foot.

"Have you been in New York ever since?" inquired the young lady, when this incident was concluded. "I haven't seen you."

Paul did not quite know how to answer. So far as he knew, the uncertain interval alluded to as "ever since" might have been measured by years or by hours. However, he had to say something.

"Oh, yes, ever since," he answered, with a smile, which he was painfully conscious could have appeared inane only at its best, and which was much more likely to have seemed idiotic.

There are few of the minor embarrassments of life at all comparable with that of being unexpectedly addressed by some one who knows you, but whom you do not know and whom you are fully conscious you ought to know; nor are the difficulties of the position lessened when the person in question is a young and pretty girl.

"If I was sure I had not seen her for years," thought Paul, "I could remark how much she is grown, for I don't believe she can be twenty; but, as I may have met her last week, I can't risk that."

But a happy inspiration arose out of the reflection.

"How well you are looking!" he said.

"Thank you. So every one tells me. Kitty Vaughn says—Oh, by the way, have you seen Kitty lately?"

"I see Miss Vaughn almost every day," answered Stuyvesant, somewhat stiffly, not altogether pleased that this fair incognita chose to thread the mazes of his most sacred emotions unrecognized.

"Of course you do: how stupid of me! Well, give her my love, please, and tell her I think it's real mean of her never to come to see me, often as she has promised."

"Perhaps she has forgotten your address," hazarded Paul. If he could pin this unsubstantial acquaintance down to some definite locality, perhaps he might find a name for her. But he was baffled.

"Nonsense! that's altogether too thin! She has my address right enough, but she's afraid of half an hour on the train; that's all that keeps her away."

So the young lady without a name lived outside New York,—half an hour by train. Paul was not much wiser. The locality thus vaguely indicated might be any one of a dozen sylvan retreats in New Jersey or on Long Island; or it might be on any one of the several roads running out of the Grand Central station.

"You won't forget? You'll be sure to tell her?" pursued the young lady.

"I won't forget," answered Paul, pledging himself to the possible as embodied in the first part of her sentence, and ignoring the impossible as embodied in the last.

"Are you going far up-town?" he asked, when the conversation had languished so long that the pause began to be awkward.

"As far as Forty-Second Street, of course," she answered, opening her brown eyes. "I've spent all my money, and now I'm going home again, as a good little girl should do."

Paul laughed a little, as in duty bound.

Suddenly the young lady spoke again, with a quickness that seemed bred of apprehension: "You're not going to the dépôt, surely?"

He laughed again, this time with genuine amusement at her evident disquietude.

"No, I am not," he said. "Were you afraid I was?"

She colored a little. "How absurd! Of course not; but—I—it seemed such an odd time for a gentleman to be going out of town."

"Do you think so?" he answered. "Any day is a good day for that, if there is a stronger attraction in the country than in the city,—which is not my case."

She looked at him curiously. He began to congratulate himself on having a little puzzled this girl who had puzzled him so much. He went on:

"I am only going as far as Twenty-Sixth Street, and we're almost there. I am going to call on a Mr. Vaughn,—the brother of the Miss Vaughn we were speaking of."

"Are you going to his studio?" she asked, with a quick anxiety which mystified Paul more than ever. This unaccountable girl knew Charley too.

"Certainly, to his studio," he answered. "He is an artist, you know."

"Of course I know that!" she replied, somewhat impatiently. "But are you going by appointment—or—I mean, does he expect you?"

"Not that I know of," answered Stuyvesant, more mystified than ever. "I am just going to drop in on chance. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing," she replied, inconsequently, but with an obvious look of relief; and then a mischievous smile set the dimples playing again round the corners of her mouth.

"Of all the riddles!" thought Paul; "but I haven't time to solve it. Here's Twenty-Sixth Street."—"I'll say good-by," he added, aloud, "and I hope you won't find your half-hour in the train tedious."

"Oh, I'm sure I shan't," she said, with a bright laugh, at the same time frankly extending her hand; "and if you find Mr. Vaughn at home I hope you will have an immensely pleasant call." And her merriment, as she spoke, took on a mischievous tone.

Paul raised his hat and left the car. "Confound the girl," he thought, "she's laughing at me, and I can't blame her for it; but she was really scared when she began to believe that I was going to the station. If I had nothing better to do, I'd go there just for spite."

But Stuyvesant had something better to do. The temporary diversion afforded by this chance meeting soon faded out of his thoughts when he turned eastward and walked rapidly toward the Rubens, as the building was called in which Charley Vaughn had his studio.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT INVADES THE RUBENS.

ON a corner of Fourth Avenue not far from Madison Square there stands a broad building with very broad windows on the north side of each of its four upper stories. Each of these very broad windows lights up an artist's studio; there are twenty-four of these windows;

and two dozen artists are the sole tenants of the Rubens,—as the house was called to indicate the intention of its projector. Even the three stores on the ground-floor are in harmony with the purpose of the building, for one is occupied by a restaurant, whose chief cook is an artist of a high order, and one is rented by a dealer in paints and brushes and frames, and the third, a mere office, bears the sign of the most expert and careful mover of pictures on all the island of Manhattan.

Between the restaurant and the shop of the dealer in artists' materials, a portico projects, bearing a medallion on each side containing the heads of Rubens and Rembrandt. Passing under this, the visitor goes down a long dark passage until he comes to the dark steep stairs. (As the Rubens had been built expressly for artists, the architect had omitted to provide an elevator.) At the landing on each floor there is a strip of board nailed to the wall and stained black. On this are painted the names of the inhabitants of that floor. It was only when a visitor had mounted to the uppermost story that he discovered on this artistic directory the name of

CHARLES VAUGHN. 

If the visitor followed the silent monition of this outstretched finger, he walked to the end of the corridor and found himself at last before a door which bore the name of the young artist. This door opened directly into the studio.

In the Rubens one studio resembles another, and to describe one is to describe all. The description is easy. It is a room of about twenty feet square. Opposite the door is the broad window which helps to give the exterior of the building its architectural peculiarity. Opposite the window is a gallery eight or nine feet wide, with a balustrade which makes it look like a balcony. Along one side-wall is a flight of steps leading up to this gallery. In one corner, under the gallery, is the door leading to the main hall of the building, and in the other a wash-stand with running water. Generally a screen or a curtain shuts off a space in this corner by the wash-stand, and sometimes it conceals a bed, for not a few of the artists who inhabit the Rubens are bachelors, wedded only to their art, and frequently they camp out in their studios. Sometimes it is the gallery which is made to serve as a bedroom, being draped about by curtains and stuffs of all sorts, embroideries from Spain, textiles from the Orient, and painted buffalo-robcs from the plains of the West. Sometimes, again, the gallery is a dressing-room for the model, and a store-house of odds and ends of one kind or another, studio-properties, lay-figures, studies, sketches, broken frames, and what not, in a disorder problematically picturesque and indubitably dirty.

Paul mounted the stairs: he was an accustomed visitor, and had long since ceased to grumble at the ascent. Following the mute in-

vation of the painted hand, he knocked at Charley's door. It was opened by a man of about fifty,—a man with the typical face of the comic caricature of Irishmen, but preternaturally grave. This face was acidulated by a certain droop of the corners of the mouth and a general twist of the features into an almost vindictive expression of sourness.

"Well, Barney, how are you?" The old man was a recognized character all over the studio-building, and, as Charley's particular retainer, Stuyvesant knew him well.

"Bad, sor. What wid the lumbago in the small o' me back, and the rheumatics in me left shoulder, sorra wink o' sleep do I get night nor day."

"That's very bad, Barney," answered Paul, too well acquainted with the old fellow's habitual querulousness to humor it by further sympathy. "Is Mr. Vaughn in?"

"Indade an' I might have known that it wasn't to ax after my health ye've come trapezin' up all them stairs," Barney replied, with an injured air.

"You certainly might," said Paul, hardly able to repress a smile at the discontented look on the face of the old Irishman. "I came to see Mr. Vaughn. Is he in?"

"Indade an' he's not," began Barney. By this time Stuyvesant had passed him and entered the studio. "Oh, that's right. Make a liar o' me! What's the good of yer axin' me questions, if ye're not goin' to believe me whin I tell ye?" expostulated Barney, following him into the room. "But sarch, sarch, an' welcome. Sure there's the table he might be under,—to say nothin' of the gallery, that 'ud hide a dozen like him. Sarch, if ye want to. Don't be afeard of hurtin' my feelin's; sure I'm used to it."

"I don't doubt you at all, Barney; but I am very anxious to see Mr. Vaughn, and, as I have a few minutes to spare, I'll wait, on the chance of his coming in." And Stuyvesant pushed a richly-embroidered robe from the most comfortable chair in the room, and sat down.

Barney picked up the mass of drapery and grumbled back with it to the recess under the gallery.

"That's right," he said: "make hay over the whole place. Divil a thing have I to do but to follow the likes of ye round an' clean up yer messes, wid the lumbago in the small o' me back."

"Do you think he'll be in soon?" called Paul, when the muttering began to subside.

"Arrah, what time have I to think, whin me heart's broke wid work? Maybe he will an' maybe he won't; an' that's the nearest I can come to it, for there's no dipindence out of what he says, at all, at all."

"And what did he say?" demanded Stuyvesant, impatiently. He knew that the old man was a good servant, honest, faithful, and industrious, and that his one fault was a cross-grained temper, and yet he had often wondered how Charley had endured him so long.

"What did he say, is it?" said Barney. "Well, I'll tell ye that;

an' if ye believe him, ye've a better chance of heaven nor I have, if faith'll save ye."

Paul looked at the old man in surprise. "Have you any reason to doubt his veracity?" he asked.

"Well, I have, thin. Don't I see him at his breakfast most mornin's? an' what he ates wouldn't physic a snipe."

"I mean, don't you think he was telling the truth?" explained Paul, awakening to the consciousness that the simplest words were best adapted for a conversation with Barney.

"I don't think any man's tellin' the truth until I see it proved; an' thin I doubt it," was the uncompromising rejoinder.

"Faith will never save *you*, Barney; that's a fact," laughed Paul. "Now tell me, without any more beating about the bush, when Mr. Vaughn expected to return."

"He *said* he'd be back to-night."

"To-night! What did he mean by that?" Paul inquired at once.

The utter unreasonableness of expecting him to attach a meaning to any man's words was plainly set forth on Barney's expressive features; but he contented himself with a grunt. Stuyvesant saw the futility of expecting help from that quarter. Without waiting for a definite reply, he continued:

"It is very provoking. I wanted to see him particularly; and— By Jove, it's a quarter before four now," he added, glancing at his watch.

"Want'll be yer master, I'm thinkin'," muttered Barney below his breath. "Well, I'm goin' home," he added, aloud: "there's no call for me to be waitin' here till dark. If he comes he comes, an' if he don't come he stays away, an' that's all there is to it."

"Does Mr. Vaughn spend much of his time here now?" asked Paul, partly impelled by the wish to say something, and partly on the alert to gain any possible information which might have a bearing on the mysterious business that had taken him there.

Barney was putting on his overcoat, and enveloping his neck in many folds of a long knitted comforter, which somehow had the effect of accentuating his native ugliness to an almost incredible degree.

"No," he answered, with an inflection of supreme contempt. "He never does be here. He's always off gallivantin'. Why shouldn't he? If I had a son,—an' a son is the only misfortin' I never was throubled with,—before I'd make him a painter I'd see him ass to an apple-man."

And, as if to allow Paul time to weigh the comparative merits of the two professions, Barney relapsed into silence, broken only by a few ejaculations expressive of the physical torture he had endured during the exertion of wriggling into his overcoat.

"Ah, thin, bad cess to ye, Adam," he broke forth again when the operation was fairly concluded, "if ye'd had the good luck to choke on the first bite of the apple, there'd be neither overcoats nor lumbago to play the divil with the world."

The old man moved toward the door, and stopped with his hand on the latch.

"If Mr. Charley comes in while ye're waitin',—which he won't,—will ye show him thim letters an' things on the table forninst ye? They came this mornin'," he said.

He turned the handle and hobbled out on the landing, his querulous voice continuing awhile, till it was abruptly cut off by the closing of the door:

"Call it a thrade! I'd liefer be the last glass of whiskey in the bottle, of a wake-night; I'd last longer and have a happier endin', and no one would be axin' questions that——"

To what kind of questions Mr. Barney so particularly objected must remain forever undetermined: at this point in his protest he slammed the door and left Paul Stuyvesant to silence and to solitude.

So Charley spent little time in his studio, thought Stuyvesant. His work would seem to have lost its charm for him, who was once, as Paul well remembered, earnest, eager, and enthusiastic: all this had changed with the other changes that had come upon him. His appetite was poor, too,—so Stuyvesant had gathered from a remark of Barney's; and a trouble or preoccupation which will affect the appetite of a man of Charley's age must be serious indeed. Stuyvesant set himself to think: occupied as he had been lately with Kitty, he had seen less of her brother. It was quite a month since he had been at the studio; he had met the boy only at Mrs. Vaughn's house and on the rare occasions when he had called on him. What the date was when these alterations in his friend had first begun to force themselves on his notice, Stuyvesant could not say. It was only this very morning that something tangible had brought the matter prominently before him. He was conscious, now that he looked back, of a hundred trifles, unnoticed at the time, which seemed to indicate a degree of preoccupation in the young artist. Paul could not determine when he had first noticed these things; for, until now, he had noticed them unconsciously. Certainly it was since Charley's return from Europe in the fall. It was two or three months ago, Paul fancied; but of this he could not feel as sure. In his abstraction, he rose and began to pace slowly up and down the room.

He stopped before the table on which lay the two or three letters and postal cards to which Barney had drawn his attention before going out. His eye fell on them mechanically. He started back with an exclamation, and raised his arm with the gesture with which a man deprecates or seeks to ward off an impending blow.

Exactly on the top of the little pile of mail-matter lay a postal card with the address downward. The face of the card, containing less than two lines, written in a bold mercantile hand, lay directly under the eyes of the visitor. Stuyvesant was not conscious of reading these two lines, but unwittingly he had mastered their meaning at a glance. It was as though the words leaped out at him from the paper and struck him with a force purely physical.

These were the words on the postal card:

Look in and see me at your earliest convenience.

M. Zalinski.

Stuyvesant fairly staggered. It seemed to him that proof was accumulating on proof. This was the embodiment of the hideous shadow that was darkening over Charley's life. There was the hateful name again; and at every step he took he found it always linked with that of Vaughn; and Vaughn was Kitty's name, too. Once more Stuyvesant resolved to count no hazard too perilous, no sacrifice too dear, if he could but save the woman he loved, and the man he still trusted, from whatever shame or sorrow fate might evolve from these strange circumstances.

He took up the card. It had nothing more to tell. On the back were Charley's name and address; on the face was the line that had already burned itself into Paul's brain. It had done its mission; it had dealt its crushing blow; and it now relapsed into seeming insignificance,—a common, every-day postal card.

The post-mark told him it had been mailed that morning. Therefore, when Zalinski had refused to tell him anything about Charley or their relations to each other, he had already written to compel his attendance at that den in Bleecker Street. To compel? Yes, to compel; for, though the note was politely worded, in Paul's eyes it breathed all the authority of an imperious mandate.

There was nothing to be gained by going over the old ground. Paul had reasoned the matter out in every possible light, and he had come to the conclusion that Zalinski had some hold over his friend and was extorting money as the price of secrecy or connivance. The postal card was merely confirmative of this. It furnished no hint as to the possible nature of this hold; it gave no clue to the secret; and it was this secret which it was Stuyvesant's immediate business to discover.

There came a sharp knock at the door. Paul started, almost guiltily, and dropped the card among the other letters. This action, like his action in reading it, was purely mechanical. Indeed, he was so abstracted that it required a repetition of the summons to enable him to recall his wandering thoughts and bid the visitor to enter.

A young fellow, not more than sixteen or seventeen years of age, opened the door and came in. His face was preternaturally sharp, and he had black eyes and a swarthy complexion. He was shabbily dressed, but his clothing was by no means ragged or poverty-stricken. His long overcoat, though shiny with wear and faded into two or three different colors, was a comfortable and seasonable garment enough for the winter. He wore an imitation seal-skin cap, which he pulled off as he entered.

"Beg pardon, bister," he began, speaking as if he were suffering from a bad cold in the head,—“was you down to Bister Zalinski's to-day?”

Zalinski again! Was he about to learn something at last? As this hope flashed into his heart Stuyvesant was obliged to remain silent a moment before he could command his voice to reply.

“Yes; I was there this afternoon.”

“That's all right, then,” said the boy; “'cos he expected you and bade sure you would cub sub tibe to-day. He told you about the frabes, I suppose?”

“He told me nothing at all,” Paul answered. “I couldn't get any satisfaction from him.”

"That's odd, too," said the other; "'cos he wanted you particular to look in, and wrote you on purpose."

Paul perceived that the boy took him for Charley Vaughn, of whose appearance he was seemingly ignorant. Should he undeceive the messenger? It did not take him the tenth part of a second to make up his mind in the negative. It was an unlooked-for opportunity to gain some knowledge of the association of Charley and Zalinski. It might not be a strictly honorable mode of procedure, Paul acknowledged to himself, but this was no time to balance feather-weight scruples, when Kitty's peace of mind and her brother's career were at stake. In Charley's own interests, Stuyvesant would learn what he could.

These reflections passed through his mind like lightning, and, though the boy continued his sentence with scarcely a perceptible break, he had already decided.

"However," proceeded the messenger, "vot he told me to tell you was this. He has two frabes he'd like you to look at, both forty by twenty-four. One's bodern but very handsob; and t'other's the regular antique."

"All right," said Paul, and as he was speaking he was trying to think more quickly than he had ever thought in his life before. Was it possible that Charley's visits to Bleecker Street were only in search of cheap picture-frames? Did Zalinski deal in such articles? That was likely enough. Pawnbrokers, so he had heard, sold anything and everything. If this were the innocent explanation of all the strange circumstances, he had acted in his suspicion most unwarrantably. What right had he to question Zalinski? and how could he justify to himself his present assumption of Charley's identity?

But there were more suspicious circumstances in the background still unaccounted for, as he knew, and he felt that he must not jump at conclusions too hastily.

"That's the dibensions you gabe, isn't it?" the boy queried, producing a scrap of paper from his pocket.

Paul took it from him.

"All right, then," the boy continued. "Bister Zalinski has two you can see any time you call. They're just the size for you. Either of them will do for the Bary Bagdalen."

And before Paul could ask another question the messenger of Zalinski was gone.

CHAPTER X.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT MAKES A DISCOVERY.

STUYVESANT was left alone with a fresh dread at his heart. "Handsome frame; 40 X 24; to suit an old master," he read. He simply nodded. His thoughts were too busy. He could not find words. He was conscious of a sudden fear so portentous, so fraught with terrible possibilities, so inexpressibly hideous, that he shrunk from analyzing it.

The Mary Magdalen was the great picture, the theft of which had come to light only the previous day; it was the strangely discovered

work of a great master, with whose no less strange disappearance the world was even now ringing.

And the shadowy, unexplained connection between two such dissimilar people as Zalinski and Paul's future brother-in-law took shape and substance over a common point,—the missing picture!

Stuyvesant was fairly stunned. All that he had feared, all that his most gloomy previsions had hinted at, was as nothing to this.

"Poor Kitty!" he murmured. A vague, boundless pity for the woman he loved filled his mind. In fancy he saw the sunny head bowed down, the frank, fearless eyes abashed to the earth, in the shadow of her brother's shame. He dared not let his thoughts stray further in this direction. If ever he needed a clear brain to plan, a steady hand to act, he needed them now; and the vision of Kitty he had conjured up unmanned him.

The Mary Magdalen! The whole story of its curious adventures, its loss and its recovery, as it had been recounted in the newspapers of the day,—partly authentic, partly hypothetical,—came back to him. And Charley had been one of the first to light upon it in the shop of an obscure Paris picture-dealer. The young painter had discussed the discovery of the picture with him that very morning. Was it that very morning? or was it a year ago? It seemed impossible that every fibre of his mental being should have been so wrenched and shocked within a few short hours.

He roused himself with an impatient start. This was no time for dreaming. He remembered his appointment with Miss Vaughn, but he remembered it only to dismiss it, as a matter of very trifling importance. He bent all his faculties to recall and analyze his conversation with Charley that morning. He strove to reproduce the scene when he had told Charley, lightly and indifferently, about the paragraph in the *Gotham Gazette* announcing the theft of the picture. He endeavored to recollect his own words, and the words in which the young artist had replied to him. Every phrase, every tone, every trick of manner, might have its value now, for all were to be sifted and examined as evidence in support of Charley's guilt or innocence.

His guilt or innocence! Even yet he could not bring himself to acknowledge that the light-hearted young fellow whom he had known and loved so long could be capable of such a crime. But the result of the morning's interview, when it came to be analyzed and scrutinized, was not reassuring. He had asked Charley when he had seen the picture last, and the question had remained unanswered. Nothing had been told save the familiar story of the finding of the Mary Magdalen in the dealer's shop. Even in that narration Stuyvesant remembered how ardent a longing the boy had expressed to be the owner of the painting. Could it be, as Duncan had said, that a man of artistic temperament might covet a masterpiece to such a degree that he would steal it, though he could never reap any satisfaction from his crime other than a guilty enjoyment by stealth? He recollected that at the news of the theft Charley had not shown the indignation which he had expected. The artist had contented himself, as far as Paul's recollection served, with a slight expression of surprise that it had not been found out before.

And Charley had a Mary Magdalen in his possession! Zalinski's messenger had said as much. Of course there were many Mary Magdalens in existence; but here were the dimensions of the frame, pencilled in Charley's own writing. There was a copy of the *Gotham Gazette* upon the table. Evidently Charley had not taken time to open the paper before going out that morning. Stuyvesant hastily unfolded the sheet and compared the cabled figures which gave the picture's dimensions with the memorandum in his hand. They were identical. The measurement of the missing Titian was forty inches by twenty-four.

Although doubt seemed no longer possible, Paul still hoped against hope. He asked himself what opportunity Charley had had to take the picture. Two months and more had elapsed since the artist's return from Paris. The comparison of dates was of little value here, since Mr. Sargent had been absent from Paris nearly seven months, and the picture had not been missed until his return. Any day or any night during seven months might have been the day or night when the picture was cut from its frame. Charley had been in Paris, during Sam Sargent's absence, for nearly three months.

But it was absurd to believe that the boy could have accomplished such a feat alone and unassisted. Stay! Was it so absurd? Charley had admitted, or he had dropped hints that amounted to an admission, that he had seen the Mary Magdalen since its owner had seen it; he had remarked that locked-up apartments were not impregnable, or words to that effect. Paul remembered this part of the conversation but vaguely. In any case it was not necessary to assume that the young man had acted alone. There was a factor in the case which Paul never forgot for an instant. There was M. Zalinski.

This man was "notoriously crooked,"—so Duncan had told him. He was a receiver of stolen goods; quite likely he was in communication with thieves in all the capitals of the world. Stuyvesant had no idea of the possible ramifications of a business like Zalinski's, but he thought it probable they were extensive. If the Jew had any part in the removal of the picture, or if he had any knowledge of its removal, there was at once an easy and a terrible explanation of the hold he had over the artist,—black-mail!

So Stuyvesant's suspicions had not misled him, after all! If the old fence were in possession of any such secret about a young man in Vaughn's position, he was assured of a revenue to be measured only by the latter's fortune and possible professional earnings. As it happened, the check which Paul had given to Charley and which had been passed over to Zalinski, the check which had first started him on the trail of this hideous secret, was for a very small sum. But it had not been an isolated transaction. Duncan had spoken of two other checks bearing Vaughn's signature which had reached him from the "fence." Stuyvesant had not thought to inquire as to their amount, but that mattered little. According to the chapter of probabilities, if three of Charley's checks had been paid by Zalinski to Duncan, dozens must have passed through the same hands into other channels.

To Stuyvesant's legal mind the case looked terribly complete. He

could find no loop-hole of escape. He could see no peg on which to hang a reasonable doubt of Charley's guilt. And yet he doubted. He had known the young fellow long; and that was one point. The motive for the crime seemed entirely inadequate; that was another. But, though Stuyvesant still doubted, he was fain to confess that many good lawyers of his acquaintance, Eliphalet Duncan for one, for example, would not have felt any doubt at all, had they been in possession of the case as he could have prepared it.

But to think that a young man of such position and surroundings, to think that Kitty's brother could ever be guilty of such a crime as robbery, was almost impossible. Perhaps, though he had always been inclined to scoff at the plea, there might be reason to suggest kleptomania. If Charley stole that picture, he must be mad—if ever a man was.

If he stole it? Logically the doubt seemed hardly tenable; and yet Paul clung to it. In the course of his reading in preparation for his great work he had seen many an apparently perfect case, perfect in the chain of circumstances that constituted the evidence, fall to pieces under the stronger light of direct proof. Perhaps this case would so crumble away. Perhaps Charley could explain all these seemingly inexplicable circumstances.

If he could but see him!

He paced nervously to and fro, going the whole length of the square room from the door under the gallery to the opposite wall. The steam radiator which heated the studio rattled and banged occasionally, and each recurrence of the noise never failed to startle the uninvited visitor. Perhaps Charley would not come; certainly he would not come till late. Through the mist of his general surliness, Barney's opinion on that point had stood out in bold relief, and Stuyvesant was inclined to agree with him. At any rate, if he stayed here any longer alone he felt as if he should go mad himself. He glanced at his watch. He was still in time to keep his appointment with Kitty. He would go.

Under the flaring gas-jet which lighted the room now that night was settling down on the city, and which cast flickering and fantastic shadows on the white walls, there was a table where Charley kept pen and ink and paper.

Stuyvesant set his chair down before this and wrote a note hastily. Then he read it over:

Dear Charley:

I want to see you particularly. I have waited for you here as long as I can. I am going out now, but shall be back in my rooms by six o'clock. Come over there at once when you get back. I shall not stir till I have seen you, so you can be sure of finding me in. Don't fail; this is most important.

Yours,

Paul Stuyvesant.

Jan. 3d, 4.15 P.M.

He placed the note conspicuously on the table, where it would not fail to catch the eye of any one entering the room. Then he turned to go.

Suddenly a thought struck him. Supposing Charley to be the guilty possessor of the picture, where would he keep it? It was a thing to be guarded jealously from any mortal eye, and nowhere else could the young artist reckon on the same privacy as he could in his own studio. Barney, to be sure, might see it there in one of his periodical dustings, but no one else; and Barney was the last man in the world to have his attention attracted by that or any other picture.

Certainly, if Charley had the picture in his possession, it would be here, concealed of course, but somewhere in this one room, or in the gallery above it. Hiding-places could not be very many in so scant a space. If the painting were here, Stuyvesant could not very well fail to find it. If it were not, its absence would at least be a presumption in favor of Charley's innocence.

Of course it might be at Zalinski's; but the idea that the young fellow would steal the picture to sell again was not to be entertained for a moment. No, if he had it at all, he would keep it somewhere at hand, so that he could look at it occasionally and take such enjoyment of his surreptitious treasure as his conscience would permit him.

The short January day was drawing to a close, and even the huge north window admitted only a rapidly deepening twilight. Paul drew the curtain before commencing his search. Then he stepped back into the centre of the room, and looked round him, running over in his mind such possible corners of concealment as the studio offered.

The tables were out of the question. The little one, near the window, under the gas, held only Zalinski's postal card, Stuyvesant's own note, and the other letters. The larger one was littered with color-tubes, and sundry brushes wrapped in stained paper. Several very dusty casts were grouped in one corner, and against the wall, near them, leaned a dozen or more canvases. The easel stood, gaunt and bare, almost in front of the window: it was empty. Bits of drapery and bright embroideries were scattered about on the chairs and floor, or hung from pegs on the wall, alternating with more or less advanced studies, some with frames and some without.

The gallery seemed a more promising place of concealment, and Paul accordingly mounted the steps. The same picturesque confusion, even more intensified, reigned above. One end was curtained off to serve as a model's dressing-room, but a glance behind the hangings showed Paul that it contained nothing in the least resembling what he sought. A pile of dusty canvases occupied one corner. Paul turned them over one by one. They were some of Charley's earlier and cruder efforts, the sketches he had done before he had gone abroad, stored during his absence, and taken back among other furniture and litter when he returned and rented this studio. Stuyvesant remembered most of them well, and smiled sadly as he thought of the boyish triumph with which Charley used to refute the uninformed criticisms which Paul had offered, reluctantly enough, and under strong pressure from the artist.

There was nothing to detain him there, and he descended. Hope was rising higher, for the presence of the picture would be the only incontrovertible piece of evidence which even partiality could not affect to doubt.

This time he went under the gallery, and examined the various hangings that concealed Charley's finished and unsold works. As he raised the curtain which hid the corner farthest from the door, the gas-light fell upon a painting from which he reeled back with a cry of actual pain. Hope itself could go no further in the face of such a proof. Before his eyes leaned the lost picture,—Titian's Mary Magdalen in all the glory of its matchless beauty.

The canvas was nailed hastily to a stretcher; it was unframed; and the ragged edges bore plain marks of the hasty knife of the spoiler. Paul was no art-critic, he was not even a connoisseur, but he could not doubt the genuineness of the picture before him. It had the rich mellow tone which the years give to colors; it had all the breadth and style of Titian's best work; even Stuyvesant's unpractised eye could detect and recognize the ear-marks which had been discussed and insisted upon by the experts in the various journals while the authenticity of the Mary Magdalen had been still a matter of debate.

Stuyvesant dropped the hangings and came back into the main part of the studio. He sank into a chair and asked himself what he had best do. To what purpose would he see Vaughn now? To reproach him? to concert measures of safety with him? He did not know. He took up the note he had written, and was about to tear it up; but on second thought he laid it down again. It would be better to see the boy, better to hear what he had to say for himself, better to help him out of this scrape if help were to be had under heaven. Charley was Kitty's brother, and, for Kitty's sake, Paul would stick to him still. For her sake he would go even to the length of compounding a felony.

Zalinski must be seen and settled with somehow: on that point at least Charley could advise him. Then the picture must be returned, if possible, to the owner. Then arrangements must be made for sending the young fellow away at once,—to Europe,—somewhere, anywhere,—where Kitty should never see him again.

As for himself, he never faltered in his devotion. He thought—and he afterwards smiled to himself at the quizzicality of the conceit at such a moment—he thought that if Kitty had ten brothers, each of whom had severally and collectively broken the ten commandments, it could make no difference to him. She was all his world, all his hope, all his future; and his fidelity to her never wavered.

"I will do what I can for Charley," he thought; "but come shame, come disgrace, come what come may, I will suffer nothing to part Kitty and me."

Then he rose and turned down the gas. It is strange how a methodical man will continue to observe his ordinary habits even when the hopes and ambitions of his life are crashing in ruins around him. He drew on his gloves and took up his hat and passed out into the hall. The door, which fastened with a spring-lock, clicked behind him. He felt as he remembered to have felt the day he returned from his mother's funeral. The association of ideas was not inapt, for it seemed to him that he was now, as he had been then, turning his back on the place where the dearest friendship of his life lay buried.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT IS LATE FOR AN APPOINTMENT.

As Paul Stuyvesant left the Rubens a single stroke from a neighboring steeple told him that he would surely be late in keeping his appointment with Katharine Vaughn. It was at half-past four that she had asked him to call for her to take her to the New York Hospital. By rapid walking he would not keep her waiting more than five or ten minutes. He knew that her imperious character would not brook his apparent neglect to obey her behest. He knew that she enjoyed the power of ruling him which he allowed her. He knew that it pleased her when he playfully pretended to be humble and subservient and obsequious to her slightest whims and fancies.

But now he felt in no mood for frivolity or jesting. Life had taken on a sadder tone in the last few hours. Deeply as he was in love, he did not deny now that there were more serious things in the world than love and marriage.

As he passed through Twenty-Sixth Street the street-lamps were beginning to dot the city with long vistas of fire. As he crossed Madison Square the electric lights high up on the mast in the centre of the open space flashed out suddenly, sharply etching the bare branches of the forlorn trees on the cold white walks. There was a chill in the air, and a bitter wind swept across the city from river to river. Stuyvesant quickened his pace.

At last he stood before Mrs. Vaughn's door; and then, for all he had hurried, he hesitated. He did not know how to face Kitty or what to say to her.

While he paused in embarrassment and doubt, with his hand extended to pull the bell, the door opened, and Kitty stood before him.

"So there you are!" she cried. "At last!"

"Am I late?" he asked, not knowing what else to say, and glad almost to be scolded if the reproof would keep his thoughts from turning again to the dreadful discovery he had made.

"Late?" she returned. "Well, I should smile,—if I wasn't too angry with you ever to smile on you again."

"I hope not," he replied, mechanically.

"You were so late that I had given you up and I was going without you. What excuse have you to offer?"

"I don't know," he managed to answer. "I haven't any on hand: in fact, I'm 'most out of excuses just now." And he tried to smile.

"That won't do at all, Paul," said Kitty, as she closed the door of her house and started down the steps. "That's adding insult to injury; for you might at least have paid me the compliment of inventing an excuse."

Ordinarily there was nothing that Stuyvesant would have enjoyed more than this brisk walk through the gathering dusk of a winter day with the woman he loved. Even her scolding was as music in his ears generally; and to him it mattered little what she said, so long as he might listen to her voice. But now the music was all discord, and he

had no heart for the airy talk about trifles which was wont to give him the greatest delight.

He tried to hide his perturbation from her, but she soon saw that he was not as bright or as lively as usual.

"What is the matter with you this afternoon, Paul?" she asked, as they turned into Fifth Avenue.

"The matter with me?" he repeated, absently. "Oh, nothing,—nothing at all!"

"Did you get yourself talked out at lunch," she pursued, "that you haven't a word for me?"

"How did your lunch go off?" he asked, hastily, catching at a straw.

"The grabiola?" she replied. "It was better than most grabiolas, and there were the most toothsome things to eat. There was a *crème de marron au nid de merles* which was a dream,—a most delicious dream! I'd like to live in a palace and have nothing to do but read novels and eat things like that while listening to Strauss's waltzes and Chopin and Schubert."

Stuyvesant was slowly regaining control of himself, and he exerted his will vigorously to throw aside his overmastering melancholy, if it were only for the moment.

"And how did the rehearsal of your Kinder-Symphonie succeed?" he asked.

"So you remember that, do you?" she asked. "If your memory is so good now, how came you to forget your appointment with me?"

"I did not forget it; I was detained."

"That's no excuse at all. You should not let anybody detain you," Kitty returned. "Now, who was she?"

"Who was who?" asked Stuyvesant, in surprise.

"Who was the pretty girl who detained you?" she protested.

"But it wasn't a pretty girl who detained me," Paul explained. "It was——"

He checked himself. He could not tell her how or why or where he had been detained.

"Well?" she asked.

Then he saw an opening for a diversion of her attack.

"I was detained by some unexpected business; but I did meet a pretty girl to-day——"

"Oh!" said Kitty. Sometimes a monosyllabic interjection may be fraught with a volume of meaning.

"And I wish you could tell me who she is," continued Stuyvesant, innocently.

"Do you mean to say that you talk to pretty girls without knowing who they are?" asked she, sharply.

"She spoke to me," Paul began to explain.

"Then I am to understand that you let pretty girls whom you don't know speak to you?" And there was a certain acerbity in the tone of Miss Vaughn's voice as she said this.

"I will tell you the whole story," Stuyvesant answered, glad enough to find a topic about which he could talk without danger.

"Perhaps it would be best," she replied, icily.

"I was riding up in a Broadway car this afternoon, when a very pretty girl got on, and of course I gave her my seat," began Paul.

"Would you have given it to her if she had been an ugly old washerwoman with a basket?" interrupted Kitty.

"I hope I should have done so," answered Stuyvesant.

"I have my doubts about it," Kitty returned. "But go on. Your story interests me strangely, as they say in plays. You gave her your seat—and what happened then?"

"She thanked me, calling me by name."

"So then she knew you?" asked Kitty.

"So it seems," he answered.

"And you don't know her?"

"No," he replied: "at least I have no recollection of having seen her before. Perhaps I may have met her somewhere at dinner or at a reception, but I cannot recall it."

"Oh!" said Kitty again; and Stuyvesant was again conscious of a fall in the temperature.

"What puzzled me most," he continued, "was that she seemed to know that we were engaged. In fact, she sent her love to you."

"How was she dressed?" asked Kitty.

"I don't know——" began Stuyvesant.

"Of course not. You are a man," she returned, with a commiserating glance. "What was she like?"

"She was a pretty girl——"

But Kitty interrupted imperiously:

"You have already said that. What I want to know is what sort of a pretty girl was she. Tell me all you happen to have noticed. I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Thus admonished, Stuyvesant described the lady as best he could, and he went over his conversation with her as far as he recalled it.

"A red-headed girl who lives half an hour out of town. Of course it was Gladys Tennant," cried Kitty when he had told his tale.

"Gladys Tennant?" he repeated, vaguely.

"Yes," she replied: "don't you remember? She lives in Yonkers. I asked you to invite her to that theatre-party; and at supper she and Charley got up a grand flirtation."

"I think I do recall her now," said Stuyvesant. "And so she and Charley flirted—yes, I remember that too. Let us hope she is not interested in him," he added, involuntarily.

"Why?" asked Kitty, sharply.

Paul saw his blunder, but it was too late.

"I don't know," he said, feebly.

"Don't you think the girl will be lucky who gets Charley?" she continued.

Stuyvesant could not forget the facts he had just found out. He could not thrust out of his mind the strange secret he had discovered in her brother's studio. And before he could make ready an answer, she went on:

"Don't you think Charley is good enough for any girl?"

"Yes," replied Stuyvesant, hastily,—“oh, yes. I have always said that Charley was a good fellow.”

“That’s what you say about him, is it?” asked Charley’s sister. “And that’s how you say it?”

“I shall always stand up for him,” went on the unlucky Paul. “I hope he will always find a friend in me.”

Kitty withdrew her hand from Stuyvesant’s arm.

“I see that you have some grievance against Charley,” she said, coldly. “But I think it would be more manly of you to go to him and have it out than to make insinuations to me!”

“Kitty!” cried Paul, astonished at this outbreak.

“I have known Charley longer than I have known you,” she continued, “and I know him better than you do.”

“I do not doubt it,” he returned, “but——”

He checked himself again. What could he say? There was nothing to do but to bear her reproaches in silence. He could not justify himself. He could not tell her what he knew about her brother; he could not tell her that for her sake he stood ready to do anything in his power for Charley, if he might yet save the unfortunate and misguided boy.

And so it was that they walked on in silence, side by side, down Fifth Avenue to Fifteenth Street.

They turned the corner, and in less than a minute they stood before the broad portal of the New York Hospital.

“Here is where I am going,” said Miss Vaughn, icily. “I will not trouble you any further, Mr. Stuyvesant.”

Paul started as she addressed him thus formally, and he gave her a reproachful glance.

“It is never a trouble to do anything for you,” he returned. “It is always a pleasure to be with you.”

Miss Vaughn had left him without shaking hands, and she mounted the few steps before the door. Then she turned: perhaps she had caught his reproachful glance; perhaps the sorrowful tones in his voice touched her; at any rate, she relented a little.

Standing on the steps above him, she looked down and said,—

“I shall be here until a quarter-past six. You may come back for me then—if you like.”

Before Stuyvesant could speak, he recollected that he had left a note for Charley saying he would be at home after six and begging an immediate interview, the importance of which forbade any postponement.

“I wish I could come, but——” he began.

The chill smile swept over her face again, as she interrupted him:

“Don’t come, if you don’t want to.”

“But I do want to come,” he urged, “if I had not an engagement——”

“You need not make any excuse,” she said, frigidly. “Your excuses are not so successful to-day that I care to hear them.”

Stuyvesant wished that he could tell her that his engagement was with her brother and that for her brother’s sake he must keep it. But it was impossible.

"Good-evening," she said, as she passed through the door, and the chill of those last words smote Stuyvesant to the heart. It was the first time that he and she had parted except in amity; and a parting like this was hard to bear.

From the Hospital he went directly to the College Club. He did not know when Charley would get his note and when he might expect to see the boy. He must be prepared to wait, if need be, without leaving his apartment. He foresaw that he should have to forego his dinner if Charley did not return to the studio before night. Stuyvesant walked into the Club and ordered a dozen raw oysters, as the food most easy to get and most easy for him to eat just then, when he felt as though a mouthful would choke him.

As he sat down at a table to give his order, little Mat Hitchcock came in, a man whom he detested.

"Halloo, Paul," he cried, with a familiarity as offensive as it was unwarranted, "what's the matter with you? You look off-color to-night? Has your best girl gone back on you?"

Under the strain on Stuyvesant just then, this was more than he could stand.

He arose, and, facing Hitchcock, he said, calmly, and yet with force,—

"That is my business, Mr. Hitchcock, and I suggest that you mind your own."

Little Mat Hitchcock started back.

"I didn't mean to offend you," he said, hastily.

"I think it likely," returned Paul, coldly, "that you cannot help being offensive whether you mean it or not."

Hitchcock withdrew into the smoking-room, where he spent the evening telling everybody who chanced to come in how he had been grossly insulted by that Stuyvesant man.

When Paul had hastily swallowed his oysters, he left the Club and walked rapidly back to his apartment.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT PASSES A DISTURBED NIGHT.

THE quaint little clock on the mantel-piece was chiming six as Stuyvesant let himself into his apartment and closed the door behind him. At any moment now Charley might be expected to make his appearance in answer to the note, and there was nothing for Paul to do but to wait. He lighted the gas, and proceeded to make up the fire, which had burned low.

After changing his costume to the ease of smoking-jacket and slippers, he filled his pipe. Stuyvesant had spent some years in Germany, and since his return he indulged in cigars or cigarettes only in deference to cisatlantic prejudices. In his opinion, the only true way to enjoy tobacco, especially in the evening, was to absorb its aroma through the brief stem of a well-blackened meerschaum. He would have just time for a comfortable pipe, he calculated, before Charley came.

In truth, his nerves had need of a sedative. Never had his composure received a ruder blow than it had that day. Now only, in the quiet of his own room, after he had in a measure recovered from the first shock of the discovery, could he realize the full horror of the situation. On the discovery of the damning evidence of the picture, all possibility of doubt had fled, and with it all hope. He groaned inwardly, and strove to turn his thoughts into a different channel. When Charley came, the situation must be faced boldly. Explanations must be given and received. Shifts and expedients must be devised. It was a sickening prospect. For the moment surely he was entitled to indulge in pleasanter reveries—if he could.

Ordinarily Kitty was the centre of his every thought,—the one idea, above all others, to which he cared to turn, sure of a welcome and agreeable distraction. But now even Kitty's image had a shadow of gloom on it. She had parted from him in anger. The walk along the lighted streets to which he had looked forward with so much pleasure in the morning had turned out to be only an opportunity for misunderstanding. She seemed to have relented a little before they separated, Paul remembered, and he blessed her for it. Then the clouds closed in again. He had been compelled to thrust back the olive-branch she had proffered so sweetly, and he had not been able to offer any explanation of his seeming discourtesy. Until then she had been only angry, and Kitty's anger, though unpleasant, was not a novelty to him, for she had a quick temper: it was a surface-fault, as Paul well knew. But at parting she had been offended; she had looked hurt; and he writhed at the remembrance. His refusal of her request to escort her home must have seemed to her very odd. Obviously, there was no comfort to be had out of thoughts about Kitty.

The little clock cut the silence with a sharp metallic voice. Seven already! Stuyvesant could hardly realize it. He rose and shook the ashes out of his pipe and took a turn or two up and down the room. Then he opened the window and looked out. The sky was clouding over, and the wind was milder. A change of weather was impending, and it would probably rain before morning. The streets below were comparatively quiet. It was the hour when New York dines. A few shop-girls from the later-closing stores straggled along, tired enough, no doubt, after their long day, and yet they trudged ahead briskly on the way home. The cars, dwarfed by the height from which he looked on them, crept along like huge beetles; those bound up-town were filled to overflowing, those going in the opposite direction were nearly empty. Delivery-wagons were still dashing about in all directions, loaded with the result of the day's shopping. A group of well-dressed young men turned into the square; they were very animated in gesture and talked loudly; Stuyvesant could hear their voices, but not what they said. A policeman had stopped directly beneath the window and was slapping his white-gloved hands across his chest to keep up the circulation. To him advanced a man of dishevelled appearance and lurching gait. As he approached he required a great deal of the side-walk, and the shop-girls drew together right and left as he passed, and charitably gave him all he needed. He questioned the policeman earnestly

but apparently unintelligibly, for the officer was obliged to have the question repeated. This the other, clinging to the uniformed arm with a touching air of confidence, was nothing loath to do. Finally, the policeman walked him gently away. Paul looked out and watched their progress, wondering whether the officer was about to arrest the drunkard. On reaching the corner the policeman pointed along the side-street with his club. Apparently the man had been asking his way home, and he now became obviously eloquent in the expression of his gratitude. As the policeman turned away, the fellow lurched off westward down the street, occupying more side-walk than ever.

Stuyvesant closed the window and returned to his chair by the fire. Evidently Charley must have gone to dinner without returning home. But of course he would return to the studio directly after dinner, and then he would find the note. Paul endeavored to recollect exactly what he had said in the few lines he had written, and was angry with himself because he could not recall them word for word. Of one thing he was sure: he had not said half enough! If he had the note to write now he would speak out plainly. But, after all, what he had said was surely sufficient to bring Charley over as fast as his feet could carry him. If he had written more, the boy might have been frightened and he might have run away.

Eight o'clock: the last hour seemed to have passed rapidly enough. Even allowing Charley to have lingered over his dinner at the Fried Cat or the Hole-in-the-Wall, his favorite restaurants, where he met many fellow-artists, long enough to have smoked a cigar afterwards, he could not be much later now. Paul went to the window again, and again had the character of the traffic changed. The streets were filling up rapidly, as cabs and carriages were dashing about. Street-cars and pavements were alike crowded. There was a theatre close by at which a popular piece was being performed, and Paul noticed how large detachments of the throng drifted toward the open doors of the play-house. The policeman had vanished. There was no still life in the picture at all. The cold brilliance of the electric light accentuated a mass of movement and bustle. The shop-girls had faded away. The women were all well dressed, bright, and, at that distance, apparently handsome and happy. The daughters of Eve look differently at the beginning of an evening of pleasure and at the end of a day of toil.

Half-past eight rang from a steeple across the square. Charley must have gone from his dinner straight to the theatre or some place of amusement without stopping at his studio. How could he have the heart to enjoy himself with Nemesis on his track? Stuyvesant felt a hot wave of indignation against young Vaughn roll across his mind. What right had Charley to be out among those joyous holiday throngs while he, Paul, was stretched on a rack of vicarious apprehensions? Was he to spend his evening, when he might have been with Kitty, when he should have been with Kitty, waiting for that boy, who did not even think it worth his while to return to his studio to see if anything had happened in his absence? "One would think," muttered Paul, irefully, "that he would feel uneasy to-day, when the loss of the picture has just been discovered. It seems to me that if I were in his

place I should not dare to leave that studio for a moment, knowing what it contains. But if I had been in his place the Mary Magdalén would be in Sam Sargent's Paris apartments, where it belongs, and there would be none of this trouble at all."

Nine o'clock sounded from the clock on the mantel. Stuyvesant was now seriously uneasy. What if Charley had returned to his studio and by some mischance had failed to see the note? On reflection, Paul dismissed this fear as not worth considering. The note had been so placed that it could not but catch his eye. That Charley had purposely ignored the summons was not to be supposed. It would not be like Charley; and yet there were a great many things in this whole dreary business which were even more unlike him.

On the whole, the easiest and most logical supposition was that he had been detained somehow, or somewhere, and that he had not yet returned to his studio. Paul would greatly have liked to go to the Rubens to satisfy himself on this point, but he was afraid to stir out. His most distinct recollection of the note he had left was that he had charged Charley to come straight to him, and that he had declared his intention of remaining at home until he received the visit. To go to the studio now would therefore be to run the risk of missing him on the way. Clearly, the only thing to do was to wait.

Ten o'clock it was when Stuyvesant next looked at his watch. He took down his pipe and filled it again. Never had the goddess Nicotina had a more stubborn demon to exorcise than that which occupied his breast that night. Over and over again, with wearisome reiteration, he traced the whole case which he had so unwillingly worked up against Charley. Hoping against hope, he tried again and again to find a flaw in it somewhere; but to no purpose. From the starting-point of the check to the finding of the picture, all was clear, logical, unanswerable. The hypothesis of black-mail fitted every circumstance that required accounting for,—Charley's preoccupation, his changed manner, his neglect of his work, his association with Zalinski, and his paying money to the creature whom Stuyvesant recalled with a shudder. And in the picture Paul had found the guilty secret, the key to all these mysteries.

He smoked rapidly, in quick impatient puffs, and when his pipe went out he immediately filled another, laying aside his favorite meerschaum to cool. It was soon eleven o'clock, and the streets were all astir again. There were crowds pouring out of the theatre. The jingling car-bells and the grinding carriage-wheels reached Paul even in his aerial castle. There was a big ball at the Academy to-night, he remembered. He had forsworn such gayeties since he had become engaged to Miss Vaughn, but he caught himself wondering who would be there this year. "The same old crowd, I suppose," he muttered, half cynically, half contemptuously; and then he wondered how that same old crowd would regard him if it should ever become known who had stolen the picture. This train of thought was unbearable; and Stuyvesant sprang from his seat again, and paced the room, pipe in mouth.

Soon the last possible plea which he could advance to his own mind for Charley's continued absence would be passed upon. If the young fellow had gone to the theatre without calling at his studio, he might

have been delayed till eleven o'clock, but certainly not much later. It was very near midnight now. The latest performance at any theatre had been concluded some time ago. A few minutes more must decide.

Once again he raised the window and looked out. The night was much milder, but dark and cloudy, but this made little difference within the sweep of the electric lights which shed an artificial moonlight around the square. There was a steady sound of trampling feet from the pavement, the activity of the street-cars was undiminished, and the rattle of the cabs and carriages seemed to have acquired a fresh impetus. There was no sign of New York falling asleep yet.

At this moment a chorus of clear young voices floated up from the sidewalk. Words and tune were alike familiar to Stuyvesant, and he unconsciously hummed them over in time with the band of light-hearted Columbia boys who were passing below :

"I'm the son of a, son of a, son of a, son of a,
Son of a Gamboleer!"

Then he shut the window with an impatient ejaculation, and kicked a footstool, against which he stumbled as he turned, half across the room. Neither the nerves nor the temper of Mr. Paul Stuyvesant were reaping any benefit from his vigil.

Half-past twelve, within a minute or two, it was, when he glanced again at his watch. He had missed the light note of his own clock while looking out of the window, and the midnight hour, ringing from a hundred steeples and towers far and near, had not even attracted his attention. Was Charley never coming home? Was he—— And then for the first time an appalling thought swept across Paul's consciousness like a spectre, and he shivered to his very marrow under the clutch of the icy doubt. What if Charley never came home again? What if he had looked his last on the bright face that he had learned to love so much? What if Charley were dead?

No newspaper reader, no dweller and worker in the busy hive of the metropolis, is unfamiliar with the idea of suicide. Like many another horror, it is a thing to be lightly discussed and lightly dismissed, till we are brought into actual contact with it, till one of our friends bursts with his own hands the lock which guards the great mystery. Then, indeed, we realize what self-murder is, and always has been,—a terrible exception implying a burden of suffering, borne unsuspected until human nature could bear it no longer, and flung aside then with one rash gesture. And so it is that we look on the suicide with the same pitying wonder that we read of the tortures of the Inquisition, and marvel that poor humanity can endure so much, and endure it so long.

Of course Paul had no grounds to fear that Charley had taken the fatal step never to be retraced; he had misgivings only; but these misgivings grew with every moment that passed after the first chilling doubt had smitten him. Charley must have been leading a fearful life all these months, subjected to the exactions of a man like Zalinski,

with the sword of this undiscovered secret suspended over his head by a hair which he could not but know must snap sooner or later. At last the sword had fallen; the secret had been discovered; and what was more likely than that the poor boy had accepted the swiftest and easiest solution of his difficulty, and had—— Paul shuddered. He knew that he had heard and read of many a suicide committed on sligher grounds than these.

He tore off his smoking-jacket and kicked off his slippers. He would go out; he would solve this horrible doubt if he could. But he paused even before he had taken his boots in his hands. It was long past twelve now. The Rubens would be locked up. Without a key to the outer door, he could not get in; and he knew from experience that his chance of rousing any of the inmates would be small. Those who remained there all night were few; and the studios were all on the upper floors. Besides, there was a chance, a dim ghost of a chance, that Charley might yet come; and Stuyvesant had no right to be absent. It was better to wait till morning. He could act then; to-night he could do nothing but wait!

That Charley had not returned to his studio seemed clear. The loud rattle of two or three rapidly-driven hacks in the street below had inspired him for a moment with a gleam of hope by reminding him of the Academy ball. Charley might have gone to that; but Stuyvesant could not cherish this delusion long. If the boy had gone to the ball, he must have returned to the studio to dress, and then he could not fail to find the note. Paul never for a moment doubted that the letter, if read, would have brought the young artist to his rooms. He believed it would have arrested his hand with the suicide's pistol in its grasp,—that it would have checked his steps if he had conceived the idea of saving himself by flight. There had always been a close tie between the two men, a little slackened of late, it is true, but through no fault of Paul's. He was persuaded that Charley, if he could ever bring himself to tell his secret to any one, would have told it to him; and he fancied that the urgency of his note would be hint enough to Charley's alarmed conscience that the worst was known.

Stuyvesant had lost all count of the hours. The thronging thoughts that filled his brain annihilated all perception of time and space. He was like a man under a dose of hasheesh. He did not sleep, but he was conscious only in so far as he felt the dominant impression. How the long hours of that night wore away Paul could never tell, nor could he ever recall them without a shudder.

A piercing scream came up from the street. Perhaps a fight was in progress, or perhaps some poor creature had met with an accident. The cry partly roused Stuyvesant, and he stirred in his seat. Something fell to the ground. He had disturbed the manuscript of his book on Circumstantial Evidence, and it had dropped from the table. The closely-written leaves lay at his feet in wild confusion. He did not move, but slowly consciousness came back to him. He was leaning his elbows on the table, and was gazing intently on Miss Vaughn's likeness. He had drawn the little curtains, but he had no recollection of the act, nor could he even remember taking that chair. Kitty had cer-

tainly not been in his thoughts, and yet here he was, and here, for aught he knew, he had been for hours, staring at her picture.

The eyes of the faithful portrait were looking into his, gently and pathetically. With a little stretch of fancy he could have imagined that they were filled with tears. His own, no doubt, were dim and weary. Poor Kitty! If it were indeed as he feared,—if Charley in his despair had taken his life,—she would never hold her head up again. But why pause for an “if”? Living or dead, there could be no doubt that Vaughn had stolen the Titian, and in that act alone there was measure enough of shame to bow his sister’s head in the dust forever.

Poor Kitty! It was with a sigh and a feeling of unbounded compassion for the innocent, light-hearted girl that he closed the curtain and rose. He shivered as he did so, with a purely physical chill. His smoking-jacket lay on the floor where he had cast it on the first impulse that had urged him to go out; he had not replaced it with any other garment, but had been sitting in his shirt-sleeves—how long?

He glanced at the clock. It was ten minutes before six, and the fire had burned out to dull gray ashes. His first feeling of consternation at the thought that it was utterly hopeless to expect Charley now was succeeded by a sense of relief that the long night had worn itself away at last. It was morning. As he moved across the room he felt stiff from cold and long sitting in one position. He put on a coat, and stirred the ashes in the grate. They were past revival. Then he went to the window and looked out on the morning as he had looked out on the evening, after a night which had brought neither rest nor peace. It was a dull, raw dawn, and for all the light that came from heaven it might have been midnight yet. The promise of change in the weather had been fulfilled, and a close fine rain was falling and mingling with the unthawed snow that lay in patches through the square with an indescribably cheerless effect. Splash and tramp along the Avenue came a great beer-wagon, drawn by four of the enormous horses that only brewers own. The driver was sitting half asleep on his box, but his skill was little needed, as there were few vehicles in the street. A policeman in a water-proof cape was the only figure on the sidewalk. Then with a sharper clanging a milk-wagon turned into the square. Paul caught himself drearily pitying the milkman because he had to get up so early and pursue his vocation under such disheartening conditions. Then he envied him, no less drearily, because, in all human probability, he had no friend in mortal peril.

Gradually and imperceptibly the scene changed and whitened under the influence of the slow and tardy daybreak. A few figures appeared on the streets: they were workmen, dinner-cans in hand, and generally with a worsted comforter or shawl round their necks. They had wives at home, who cared for their comfort before they went forth to face a new day. Paul sighed; he was thinking of Kitty.

More and more figures appeared on the street; and the lowering dawn broadened into a murky day. New York was awakening. Paul turned from the window and proceeded to get into his boots and overcoat. The Rubens might be open by this time. Still, he did not like to leave his room where he had waited so long. Suppose even now, by

some unforeseen chance, Charley should come and find him absent. He would stay at his post to the end. Then his eye brightened a little as he hit on a simple expedient.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT SPEAKS HIS MIND.

STUYVESANT stepped out into the little vestibule of his apartment and rang the District Messenger call which was fixed at one side of the door. Then he returned to his room and sat down to his desk. He wrote a very urgent letter to Charley. It was a relief to him to write it; it seemed to give him an assurance that his friend was still in the land of the living. He asked if his note of the night before had not been received, and begged Charley, if he was at home, to come over without losing an instant. "It is of the greatest importance," he wrote, and he signed himself "Ever your friend, Paul Stuyvesant." If Charley were there to read it, he hoped that he would understand that ever as conveying an assurance that Paul would stand by him to the end.

In due course the messenger-boy arrived, and the note was committed to him, with an injunction to be as quick as possible and to bring back an answer. Then Paul sat down, to undergo a severer trial than any the long night had inflicted.

It was then about twenty-five minutes before eight, and it seemed as if the next half-hour was made up of centuries instead of minutes. Every possible and impossible contingency was weighed over and over again in Paul's mind. Would the messenger succeed in gaining admission to the studio? He scarcely hoped that Charley would be found, but very likely Barney might be there, and some news might be obtained. At all events, there was nothing to do but wait.

Eight o'clock struck at last. A key grated in the lock, and Paul sprang to his feet, white and desperate. It was only the old woman who was accustomed to come and arrange and dust his sitting-room before he appeared in the morning. She withdrew, with an apology, when she found Mr. Stuyvesant already astir and in possession, depositing the *Gotham Gazette* in the place where Paul had been accustomed to find it every morning, without ever troubling his head to inquire how it got there.

He was left alone again, with the consciousness that his nerves were in a very unsatisfactory condition. They were soon subjected to a further trial.

A sharp rap was heard at the door: the messenger-boy had returned. Paul's ashen lips could hardly falter out the monosyllable "Well?" for he knew that the doubts and fears which had possessed him during fourteen hours of a mental strain such as he had never before undergone were to be resolved now,—for better, it might be, it could scarcely be for worse. But the boy seemed unconcerned enough.

"Gen'laman was in bed," he said, and he handed Paul a note.

"In bed?" echoed Stuyvesant, as he reeled into a seat, with the

unopened letter in his hand. "In bed?" he repeated. "When did he get home?"

"Dunno," answered the boy, with a grin; and then Paul realized that the best thing he could do would be to read the answer, which was addressed in Charley's handwriting. He tore open the envelope and read the following, written in pencil on the back of his own note:

Dear old Post Script,

Of course I found your note last night when I got home, but as it was after midnight then I never thought you would expect me till the morning by the bright light. I'd have run around right off if I had supposed you would let me in. I hope you haven't been getting into trouble with the police and want me to bail you out? You can count on me every time. You can even count on me this time, as soon as I can hustle myself into a few garments. I trust your business is not serious. Though I fear it is, since you rouse me out of my beauty sleep so recklessly. When you have said your say, I've something to tell you about myself which may interest you. I think it will—and I know it will surprise you.

Yours in the bath-tub, C. V.

Paul dismissed the messenger with a nod and stared at the letter in his hand as if it were a cryptogram. What could it mean? It was couched in the writer's habitual tone of careless raillery. There was nothing mysterious or morbid or melodramatic about it: it was just such a note as the boy might have written if there were no Zalinski in the world and if the Mary Magdalen still rested in its proper frame. Could he have been dreaming? Stuyvesant asked himself if it was nothing but a nightmare springing from the hideous watch he had kept. He found no solace in this idea; he knew his head was all right, even if his nerves were shaken; and he turned to the letter again with a profound bewilderment. "I've something to tell you about myself which may interest you. I think it will—and I know it will surprise you." This was the only sentence that seemed in the least out of the common. These were the only words that even hinted at a mystery. But that Charley would refer to a matter of such gravity in such a bantering strain, was impossible.

Paul read the letter for the third time. So his long night's vigil had been wasted. Charley had returned home at midnight, and then had thought it too late to come around. Paul grew angry as he recollected how many wakeful hours he had spent since twelve o'clock and how there had not been one of them in which Charley's appearance would not have been hailed as a relief. But Charley had been in bed and asleep all the time; and he grumbled now because he had been disturbed an hour too early in the morning.

Paul's wrath waxed hotter and hotter, and it was not far from the boiling-point when the door opened and Charley walked in.

He was neat, spruce, and well-dressed as ever, rosy from cold water and the January air. About him there were no traces of a sleepless night and no signs of a hurried toilet. Everything was in place, even to a little hot-house flower in his button-hole, which might have been culled that moment, so fresh and fragrant did it look.

He came in jauntily with his dripping umbrella in his hand and deposited it carelessly in the corner. The water ran down and collected in a little pool on the carpet.

"Morning, morning," he said. "Halloo! what's up? You look as if you had been sitting up all night with your own corpse."

"I have not been to bed," answered Paul. He could not go on. The young fellow's appearance was in too sharp a contrast to the fears that had been torturing him.

"Dissipating, eh?" continued Charley, lightly, and then, noticing the other's continued gravity, "What are you looking so cross about? Oh, I see! I've left my umbrella dripping! Well, I never can remember." He took it up and stood it in the rack. "I won't be guilty again. Now, tell me, what's the row?"

"Charley," said Paul, with an effort, "I have something very serious to talk about; but you mentioned in your note that you had something to tell me. Perhaps it is the same thing. Go on. You may tell me everything."

Charley stared at him in unfeigned amazement. "I don't see how it can be the same thing," he said. "You don't know anything about it, unless you are a sharper fellow than I take you for."

"Perhaps I am sharper than you take me for, and clues have come to my hand which you never could have dreamed of. So go on; let me hear all about it."

"Let's hear what's worrying you first, old fellow," said Charley, with real concern. "Something has happened; I can see that: you look as white as a ghost with the dyspepsia. You haven't been sitting up all night and sending off for me at cock-crow for nothing. What's the matter? Anything about Kitty?"

Paul fired up at once. "Don't dare to mention her name," he said, hotly.

"Come, that's cool," rejoined Charley. "Pray, why mayn't I mention my own sister's name? She isn't yours yet, and I doubt if she ever would be if she heard you talk to me like that."

"No trifling," retorted Stuyvesant. "I know all."

Charley's eyes opened wider, and the corners of his mouth seemed twitching with a desire to laugh; but he only said,—

"The deuce you do! What a lot you must know, then!"

Paul had hard work to keep his temper. To him this cavalier way of treating a serious matter was incomprehensible. Steadying his voice with an effort, he said,—

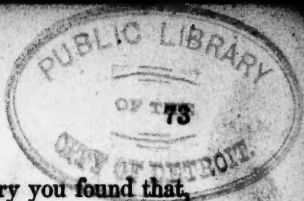
"I am deeply pained to see you approach this subject in so flippant a spirit. I was in your studio yesterday."

"Yes, and you left a note there. I got it. What's that to do with it?"

"While in your studio, I looked round among the pictures; I searched everywhere—"

"Cool of you, but, considering who you are, I'll forgive you this time," said Charley, who was engaged in lighting a cigarette.

"In the farthest angle under the gallery I came on the Mary Magdalen."



Charley's lips were puckered into a whistle.

"Now, do you know," he said, finally, "I'm sorry you found that old man. I hadn't intended you to see it,—at least not yet. I meant to have—— Well, no matter: it's none the worse, I suppose."

Paul's astonishment at this reception of his information was well-nigh ludicrous. He almost gasped for breath, and he stared at Charley as if the artist were a being of some new and undescribed species.

"How did you gain access to Mr. Sargent's apartments?" he at last found voice to ask.

"With a silver key. I never met an incorruptible concierge in my life," answered the young fellow, with a light laugh.

"And can you speak of it in that tone? Do you not realize what you have done? Do you make no account of your mother and sister,—the shame and misery you may bring on them——"

"Come, come, Stuyvesant," said Charley, quickly; "that's pitching it rather too strong."

"I can't speak half as strongly as I feel," answered Paul, hotly. "I think the whole transaction as mean and despicable as anything I ever heard of. I——"

"Look here, Mr. Stuyvesant," interrupted the young man, rising and standing before him, "you are going too far. I would bear more from you than from any other man; and I would knock my own brother's teeth down his throat—if I had one—for saying half what you have said. So just pull up short where you are, will you?"

"What did you come here to tell me?" asked Paul. "Be candid and above-board now, and I'll do what I can for you."

"What I came here to tell you is purely my own business," answered Charley, stiffly. "I should have been very glad to tell you about it, but I don't think it would possess the interest for you now that once I had fancied it would. At any rate, after the words you have used to me, I should have no pleasure in telling it."

The young man picked up his umbrella and turned toward the door. Paul could not suffer him to leave him like this, with no conception of the magnitude of the crime he had committed.

"Don't go yet," he said. "You don't seem to realize that this is a very serious matter. Do you know that this is nothing more nor less than a theft you have committed?"

"I do not regard it in that light at all," answered Charley, with his hand on the lock of the door; "and, since you entertain that opinion of me, the less we see of each other in the future the better. Good-morning."

The door slammed with a vicious sound, and Paul was alone.

He was already equipped for the street, and he had had enough, more than enough, of his rooms for the present. He would go out. It was a cheerless morning, and still too early to go anywhere, he said to himself. To Paul *anywhere* generally meant to Mrs. Vaughn's house, and that was his meaning then. Still, he fancied he would feel better out of doors; he could take a cup of coffee at a restaurant and kill time somehow till he could imagine it late enough to call on Kitty. He felt an overmastering need of seeing her, and seeing her as soon as pos-

sible. With his old methodical instinct, he picked up the scattered leaves of his manuscript and arranged them in proper order. That consumed a little time. Then he glanced hopefully at the clock, but it was only a few minutes past nine. He was disappointed. He had hoped it was later. Still, the clock might be slow. Paul knew it wasn't, but he glanced at his watch. It had run down; he had not wound it the night before. He did so now, and set it by the clock; then he thrust the *Gotham Gazette* into his pocket. It might help him to pass the time. He threw open the window, took one more glance around the room, and went out.

The streets were muddy and disagreeable, and a fine, misty rain was falling. Stuyvesant took little heed of it, but walked across the square immersed in thought. He was trying to explain Charley's extraordinary attitude, but he could find absolutely no explanation. The boy had been bitterly indignant at the accusation, as indignant as he could have been if he were innocent; but of course his innocence was out of the question. Apart from all the rest of the evidence, apart from the tangible proof of the picture, Charley admitted the fact that he had bribed the concierge to allow him access to Mr. Sargent's apartments during that gentleman's absence. He had admitted it, too, without a tincture of hesitation or shame. To be sure, though, if he were incapable of remorse for the theft itself, he would be equally callous as to the steps which had led to the crime. He remembered that Charley the day before, when speaking of Mr. Sargent's purchase of the picture, had been very severe on a man who could find no better use for his money than to buy a valuable work of art and lock it up where no one could see it. But surely this idea could not have so wrought upon the young artist as to convince him that he was therefore justified in stealing the painting. Moral obliquity like this was not to be met with in men of Charley's class and education. Yet on no other hypothesis could Paul account for the indignation, the scorn, and at the same time the brazen assurance with which he had repelled the accusation of theft, while admitting that he had stolen the picture. This perplexing problem had been viewed in every possible light, many miry blocks had been traversed, a hasty cup of coffee had been swallowed,—and it was ten o'clock.

Stuyvesant stood on a street-corner with his watch in his hand, wondering whether he could yet venture to call on Miss Vaughn.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. PAUL STUYVESANT READS THE GOTHAM GAZETTE.

It still lacked several minutes of half-past ten—more minutes than he cared to count—when Stuyvesant stood on the steps of Mrs. Vaughn's house and pulled the bell. He had never before called on Kitty at so early an hour, except by previous appointment when it had been arranged that he was to be her escort on some excursion demanding a start betimes. But this morning he felt an imperative need of seeing the girl he loved. He wanted the solace of her presence, the comfort

of a few minutes' conversation with her, after his long night of agony and his very peculiar interview with Charley at the end of it. He felt that he could not talk to her on the subject that was uppermost in his thoughts. He was determined to work out her brother's salvation alone, if that were possible; and till the last moment he would keep from the sister all knowledge of the terrible facts he had discovered. But he wanted to see Kitty for another reason. They had parted in coolness the night before; and this was in itself no slight addition to the burden he was called upon to bear. He could not believe that she was angry with him still; at any rate, a complete humiliation on his part, and unstinted apology, even without an explanation, would doubtless serve to smooth the matter over.

When the servant opened the door, he inquired for Miss Vaughn. Could he see her?

"Oh, yes, of course: she was up-stairs now with Mr. Charles."

This was an unexpected embarrassment. Paul had no desire to meet Charley again, at least not just at present. He hesitated for a full minute, and a very little would have tempted him to run away. However, Stuyvesant's was not a shrinking nature, and he entered the house, and sent a message to Miss Vaughn. Would she see him alone for a few minutes?

He was shown into Kitty's special room, the same in which he had waited for her on the previous day,—the same in which he had waited for her more times than he could reckon, though every time had its own sweet memories. The apartment was full of remembrances of her; the evidences of the girl's dilettante art were scattered around in picturesque confusion.

Stuyvesant was at a loss to account for Charley's early visit to his mother's house, where of late he had not been a frequent visitor at the best of times. Just now one would have supposed that he had enough to think of and to do, under present circumstances, without making morning calls. But Charley's conduct in this crisis had been systematically unaccountable. It was impossible to predict what he would do or say, what he would leave undone or unsaid.

The door opened, and Miss Vaughn entered. She looked very dainty and winsome in a fresh morning-gown; her eyes were dancing with happiness and health; and she had a bewitching smile on her lips. She tried to frown as Paul arose, but the smile was rebellious and would not down, so she gave up her vain assumption of displeasure and broke into a merry laugh.

"Well, Bear," she said, "have you come to apologize for your rudeness last night?"

This was just the reception Paul wished for. He was willing to apologize. Metaphorically speaking, he asked nothing better than to grovel at her little feet. All he was unwilling to do was to explain; and Kitty did not ask for an explanation.

He managed even to say, with a fair attempt at a light manner,—

"If you call me a bear, you must expect to be hugged."

"Hands off!" she cried, retreating behind a chair. "I haven't forgiven you yet for being cross."

"I throw myself on your mercy," he said, "and I beg you to believe that I was the greatest sufferer by not being on hand to walk home with you yesterday evening."

"Of course you were," she answered. "People who let their tempers get the best of them are always the greatest sufferers in the long run. But, now you have come back in a proper frame of mind, you shall be forgiven, and I'll let you take the kiss of peace."

And he took it at once. It seemed to refresh him.

"The fact is," she went on, "I have just heard something so interesting and so exciting that it has driven everything else out of my head, and it is impossible for me to bear malice. You shall guess what it is."

Paul could not guess. He had not the spirits for badinage, and, after one or two futile efforts under pressure of her insistence, he gave it up.

"Well, then," she said, "be prepared. Catch hold of something. Charley has been with me all morning, and he has made a full confession."

Kitty's recommendation to catch hold of something had not been unnecessary. Paul fairly reeled under her announcement. Charley had told her, and now, instead of Stuyvesant's finding her crushed and spirit-broken by the confession, she met him with a laugh on her lips and referred to it as something "exciting and interesting."

"He has told you all?" he gasped.

"Yes, everything. Isn't it just too lovely?"

Paul stared.

"It accounts for all that has been puzzling us in his ways of late."

It certainly did account for Charley's change of habits; but Stuyvesant could not share Miss Vaughn's satisfaction.

"You don't seem pleased," she said, more coldly. "Perhaps you're jealous. Oh, I haven't forgotten how you raved about Gladys Tennant's beauty yesterday when you met her in the street-car,—though you pretended you didn't know her."

At any other time Paul would have asked no better pastime than to combat this pretty, unreasonable pique, but now all his faculties were absorbed in a boundless bewilderment. What Miss Tennant had to do with the matter he tried vainly to guess.

"Oh, yes, you look very innocent and unconscious," pursued Kitty. "But there, I am too happy; I can't be angry with you even when you deserve it. Why, you dear old stupid, when you met Gladys she was on her way to take the 3.30 train home to Yonkers. She had very good reason to suppose Charley might happen to be on the same train; and sure enough he was on it; and the whole thing was settled as they walked from the station to her house; and he dined and spent the evening at Mr. Tennant's in the character of—in what character, do you suppose?"

Paul could not hazard an opinion.

"How perversely stupid you are this morning!" she said, with a frown of impatience. "Haven't I told you as plainly as words could say it that Charley proposed to Gladys Tennant yesterday, and was accepted, and—— What's the matter now?"

"Is that all Charley told you?" he asked.

"Yes, that is all; and a very sufficient piece of news it is, too, for a rainy morning, I should think," she retorted.

Paul breathed again. The fatal secret was still unsuspected by Kitty.

"You are not very profuse in your congratulations," she went on, after a moment's pause. Then she looked at him more closely. "What's the matter, Paul? You look tired and troubled; you are not yourself this morning. Aren't you well, dear?"

There was a note of infinite tenderness and feeling in her voice, and Paul caught the hand that she passed caressingly over his brow and pressed it to his lips.

"There's nothing the matter with me," he said. "I had a rather disturbed night, that's all. Some—something's happened to worry me. Tell me, though: this engagement,—it is rather sudden, isn't it? I didn't know that Charley was paying attention in that quarter."

"Neither did I. None of us did," answered she. "The dear boy has been most preternaturally shy about it. You see, it seems he has been in love quite a while. As far as I can make out, she took him into camp on the boat,—you know they came back from Europe on the same steamer last fall,—and he has been sinking deeper and deeper into love ever since, until now he is over head and ears. But he had an idea that Gladys was fond of some other fellow, and it has made him very miserable. He never hoped that anything would come of it, so he never told a soul a word about it. Finally he made up his mind that something had to be done in a hurry; so he took the plunge yesterday, and he found out that Gladys has been sighing for him as long as he has been dying for her, and now everything is lovely."

"I see," said Paul, slowly. He understood now the nature of the communication which Charley had intended to make to him that morning. He saw they had been at cross-purposes. He thought that the young artist had chosen a very inopportune moment for his wooing. The selfishness which Charley displayed in drawing a young girl's bright life into the shadow of his own struck Paul painfully. It was of a piece with the incomprehensible indifference and levity with which he had treated the whole transaction.

"Well, you are not very enthusiastic," said Kitty, after a pause.

"Of course I wish him all possible happiness," said Paul, with an effort, for the words seemed to stick in his throat.

"You shall say it to his face, then," said Miss Vaughn, running to the door. She was out in the hall in an instant, and calling with her clear, high-pitched voice:

"Charley, Charley,—come here a minute: I want you."

"Kitty, I beg of you——" Paul cried, springing to his feet.

But the summons had already gone forth. It was impossible to check this young lady in any course she had resolved on; and Paul had no possible excuse for his unwillingness to meet her brother. It was evident that Charley had told her nothing of their quarrel in the morning. Stuyvesant could only remain passive and let things take their course.

Presently Charley entered, light-hearted and lively as ever, without the trace of a care on his face. Paul, in his embarrassment, had withdrawn into the recess of the window.

"Well, Kit, what is it?" said the young fellow as he came in.

"Oh, I just called you down to receive Paul's congratulations: I've told him all about it—— Why, where is he?"

"Thanks, I'll take Stuyvesant's felicitations for granted," said Charley, coolly. "You see, they probably would not be exuberantly overflowing. He's been engaged long enough himself to have found out that it isn't a subject for unmixed congratulations!"

Kitty's quick eye detected something strained in the situation.

"What's the matter with you two?" she said. "Have you been quarrelling?"

"Well, it's this way," said Charley. "Stuyvesant has just found out about the Mary Magdalen, and the manner in which I secured it seems to have jarred with his fine sense of honor."

Paul nearly fainted. So her brother had told Kitty the whole business, after all. There was nothing more to conceal. He came forward from the window, just as Kitty answered,—

"Well, you know, Charley, I did not think it exactly *nice* myself."

Was the whole Vaughn family destitute of the moral sense? The girl he was engaged to referred to a felony as not "exactly *nice*!"

"That's a matter of opinion," said Charley, calmly.

Paul disagreed with him, but he said nothing.

"If a man chooses to hide away a masterpiece like that, the outside world must get at it as they can," the artist said.

Paul still remained silent.

"Well, there's something in that," said Kitty, appealing to him.

"Perhaps there is," said Stuyvesant, stiffly. "I can't see it myself. To take away Mr. Sargent's picture, without his knowledge, is in my eyes nothing more nor less than a theft."

"Since Mr. Sargent has been lucky enough to recover his Titian," said Charley, "I think he will be charitable enough to find a milder word for my very petty larceny."

"Recovered his Titian?" cried Paul, in amazement. "How can that be?"

"By the exertions of the very intelligent and efficient police of the good city of Paris," answered Charley. "Haven't you read the papers yet? You were up early enough this morning."

"No; I have—I have been thinking of something else," said Paul, producing the *Gotham Gazette* from his pocket, still folded as he had taken it from his table.

Charley took the paper from him and opened it. "Read that," he said, indicating a paragraph in the cable news.

With growing amazement Paul read this despatch:

A PICTURE RESTORED—

TO ITS OWNER!

MR. SAM SARGENT RECOVERS HIS MARY MAGDALEN!

PARIS, January 3.—The Parisian police have done a bit of detective work worthy of the real Vidocq or the fabled Lecoq. They have caught

the man who cut Mr. Sargent's Titian from its frame yesterday, and they have got back the picture itself. As I telegraphed you last night, they had a clue, and so adroitly did they follow it up that they laid hands on the thief within twelve hours after the robbery had been discovered. The theft was committed by a single man, an employee of the low curiosity-shop where the picture was discovered two years ago. He bribed the concierge of Mr. Sargent's apartments yesterday morning, and the painting was cut from its frame only an hour or two before the owner returned. The rascal has made a full confession, in which he acknowledges that his motive was to hold the Mary Magdalen to ransom and to strike the American owner for a hundred thousand francs. Luckily, a sharp-eyed detective remarked the uneasiness of the concierge when Mr. Sargent announced his loss. Under pressure, the concierge supplied a description of the thief, and the police ran him down at once. Mr. Sargent has sent ten thousand francs to the Hôtel-Dieu to endow a special bed for the detective department of the police.

"So, you see, Mr. Sam Sargent is in far too good a humor this morning to be very angry with me," said Charley, when he had finished.

"The Mary Magdalen recovered? In Paris?" Paul was stupefied with amazement. "Then what was it I saw in your room yesterday?"

Charley stared at him blankly. Gradually a light seemed to dawn on his mind, and the hard lines of his face thawed out. Finally the whole situation burst upon him at once, and he fell back on the sofa, where he rolled helplessly in uncontrollable merriment.

"Why, you don't mean to say you thought *that* was the original?" he gasped, as soon as he could recover his breath.

"I certainly did," said Paul, gravely. The humor of the affair had not yet dawned upon him.

"Oh, this will be the death of me!" said Charley, in the intervals of his merriment. "Here is an unlooked-for testimonial to the merits of my medium. I shall publish it, Paul, I certainly shall; and then I'll take a big studio and turn out old masters by the gross." He was obliged to stop, choking with laughter.

"I do not understand," said Kitty.

"Why, it's this way," continued Charley, who had temporarily regained command of his voice. "As I told you, I bribed the concierge and made a copy of Sargent's Mary Magdalen. As I always do, I primed my own canvas, and I used my famous medium; and really it made a very respectable old master indeed. It would pass muster anywhere: wouldn't it, Paul?" There was a fresh explosion of laughter, and then the young fellow resumed:

"I kept it as shady as I could, for I intended it as a wedding-present for you two, but Master Paul, here, must go hunting after a mare's nest and find one with an addled egg in it. When he got pitching into me about the theft, and so forth, I supposed he was referring to the underhand way in which I secured my copy,—and for which my conscience has pricked me more than once, I can assure you; but I've written the whole story to Sargent, and I'm sure he'll say it's

all right. But Paul actually thought I had gone in with a crape mask and an ink-eraser and cut the picture out of the frame! Oh, I shall die of this, I know I shall!"

"And did you think my brother capable——" began Kitty, indignantly.

"Oh, don't, Kit. Don't scold him," said Charley. "The poor fellow has had the worst of it all through."

Stuyvesant looked from one to the other in silence.

"Tell me, Paul," Charley continued, "how did you ever get on the track of the Mary Magdalen at all? Did you find it by accident?"

"No," said Paul. His mind was still whirling with the astonishing developments of the morning, and he could not force his ideas out of the beaten track. "No," he said; "I learned that you had been paying money at different times to a man named Zalinski, who turned out to be——"

"A pawnbroker," interrupted Charley. "One by one my most cherished secrets shrivel up under the eagle eye of my future brother-in-law. I have dealt with Zalinski; I buy most of my curios and studio-properties from him. I got that guillotine-knife that hangs in your sitting-room from Zalinski, and the bowie-knife too. I have even left him a standing order to let me know whenever he comes across anything that may appeal to my outlandish taste; but I don't tell people of it. For one thing, it looks shady to deal at a pawn-shop; and for another, if the rest of the boys got on to my racket, Zalinski's prices would go up, and there wouldn't be so much left for me."

"Charley," said Paul, advancing with outstretched hand, "I have made a great fool of myself, and my doubt of you was an outrage. Can you forgive me?"

"With all my heart, old boy, especially as you've given me the best laugh I've had for years."

"And you, Kitty?" said he, turning to Miss Vaughn.

"I don't know. I'll consider it. You've no business to be so suspicious," she answered, putting her hands behind her.

"I'll try and be less so in the future," he answered, humbly.

"And you'd better look out and walk the matrimonial chalk-line without wobbling, Miss Kitty," said her brother, "for you'll have a husband that could give Vidocq long odds and beat him."

"I think, on the whole, as you are penitent, I'll forgive you," said Kitty, gravely, wholly ignoring her brother's irreverent observation. "Now I'm going out to Yonkers with Charley to kiss Gladys Tennant. You can come if you want."

"You can come, but you can't kiss," interjected Charley.

"I'd like it of all things," said Paul, eagerly.

"You'll see how nice she is to talk to when you know who she is," said young Vaughn, mischievously, "and when you get back you can sit down and write a nice long chapter on the fallacies of circumstantial evidence, as exemplified in the personal experience of the author."

THE BROWNING CRAZE.

CRITICAL surprise has been more than once expressed, of late, that in an age so militant against the development of the poetic spirit, a single man should find himself (and that, too, at an advanced period of his life) surrounded, not to say besieged, by hosts of ardent admirers. Everybody has now heard of the "Browning Craze," and it is quite probable that many had heard of it while Mr. Robert Browning himself was hardly more to them than a meaningless name. And yet to the majority of literary men and women in England and America this cult has long been a familiar one. Not until perhaps a decade ago did it begin to assume its present spacious proportions. I remember meeting devout Brownings at least twenty years ago, when almost a boy. And as boys will, when their thoughts turn toward the letters of their time and land, I soon felt an ambitious craving to graduate into a Browningite myself.

Such a worship then possessed so fascinating an element of rarity! It was so attractive a rôle for one to give a compassionate lifting of the brows and say, "No, really?" when somebody declared himself quite unable to understand the obscure author of "Sordello." You knew perfectly well that any number of his lines were Hindostanee to you, and yet you made use of your patronizing pity and your "No, really?" all the same. There is safety in the assertion that Mr. Browning has driven more pedantic youngsters to unblushing falsehood than any other writer in the language. All sorts of roads lead to fame, and his, oddly indeed, has been the very oblique one of an unpopularity which bore superficial signs that it was preferred and courted. But a deeper glance assures the unbiassed observer that this is by no means fact. Almost every poem of the many which he has written bears evidence that the attitudinarian has been at work, that the conscious trickster has again and again superseded the conscientious artist, and that the notoriety we too often give caprice and whimsicality has been aimed after with a studied zeal. It is in this way that Mr. Browning incessantly betrays what might be called the frivolity inseparable from his temperament. Take, for example, in "Men and Women," his most coherent collection of dramatic and lyrical poetry, the profusion of rank affectations mingled with their hardy opposites. Indeed, this one book, which is by far the most serene, lucid, and endurable that he has ever given to the world, contains much that art cannot fail to find hideous, even repulsive. Scarcely a poem is exempt from some shocking flaw. In "A Lover's Quarrel," which possesses good human touches, if the verse does jerk like a sled on a road filmed meagrely with snow, we read such rhymed crudity as

See the eye, by a fly's foot blurred—
 Ear, when a straw is heard
 Scratch the brain's coat of curd!

But effects of unpardonable bathos like this abound in "Men and Women." The present essay would exceed all allowable scope if half of them were quoted. Poems which have received rapturous praise fairly teem with them. In "The Statue and the Bust" (a piece of work so often declared faultless) there are obscurities of construction for which a school-boy would be rated by his teacher. "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha" racks and tortures the most ordinary ear. "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" (another object of devout veneration) has little about it that is metrically slipshod, but affects an impartial reader, after finishing it, as a lyric literally torn from an unwilling talent; its very rhymes have a forced, factitious queerness, and its abrupt ending seems to exclaim, "Look at my wonderful suggestiveness of allegory!" And we look, if our eyes are not bloodshot with the "Browning Craze," only to conclude that the entire poem is on such mystical stilts as to transcend the reach of all sensible interpretation. "Popularity," which endeavors to laud the superiority of genius over mere facile aptitude, ends with two stanzas regarding "Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes, and Nokes," which few living men of taste would have cared to print at all, and none except their creator would have cared to offer his public as poetry. "Old Pictures in Florence" repeatedly massacres what should be a mellifluous anapæstic measure, and leaves you as tired of its eccentric attitudinizing as if you had been button-holed by some loquacious rhapsodist in one of the Arno-fronting streets.

But it would be idle, on the other hand, to deny "Men and Women" both poems and passages of poems glowing with merit. We find there "Evelyn Hope," a bit of passion worth careful heed, though overrated by its lovers because so massively self-satisfied in its transcendentalism. We find "Bishop Blougram's Apology," a brilliant study of, a narrow, glib, specious-tongued prelate, and interesting if on no other ground than its dramatic exposition of a meretricious moralist. We find the tender and pathetic "Andrea del Sarto," whose sole objection is the mannered and inharmonious blank verse which Mr. Browning always employs. We find the fervid little "Love among the Ruins," and wish its author, so often insolent in his defiance of art, had chosen to sing many more times like that for the delight of folk unborn. We find "Saul," burning with eloquence and yet perfectly intelligible, notwithstanding its cloying pietism. We find "In a Balcony," perhaps the best piece of drama Mr. Browning has ever written. We find "The Last Ride Together," an ardent episode of love-making, but lyrically spoiled by its far-fetched subtleties of simile and illustration. We find "Any Wife to Any Husband," which to read over ten times very patiently and studiously is to convince us that it is fine—and what more of critical irony could be heaped on a poem than that? We find "Two in the Campagna," which begins exquisitely and gets labored and befogged toward the end. We find "A Gramscarian's Funeral," which makes the blood beat quicker, in parts, and in parts lamentably cools it. We find "A Toccata of Galuppi's," which gives us a laugh or two as excellent Italian comedy. And lastly we find "Fra Lippo Lippi," winsome, sweet, and a poem which Tenny-

son might have told to us in verse as enchanting as that in which he has embalmed "Tithonus."

It has been the writer's deliberate purpose to deal first with "Men and Women," for this book, in its entirety, faults and virtues both included, will most probably mark the uncrumbling corner-stone of Mr. Browning's future fame. Before this he had written a very sane and splendid poem called "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." It is so fine a piece of work, indeed, that I can easily imagine his worshippers despising it. It is no nut to crack; it shows what an artist its parent *might* have been. Published originally in the same volume, if I mistake not, was "My Last Duchess," a brief enough thing, which has attained an extraordinary reputation for no apparent cause. It has the *chute de phrase* of a cruel man speaking heartlessly about a wife whom his neglect killed. But, except for the mild shudder it awakens, it is in no sense noteworthy, and the verse drags and hobbles with so much sluggishness that no one save the "professional reader" (a great friend of Mr. Browning's, because elocution helps the latter's frequent disjointed and staccato techniques) can ever succeed in rendering it rightly. Among the earlier "Dramatic Lyrics" must be remembered "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," one of the few English poems that have achieved a deserving popularity among the masses. It is a child's poem, and therefore its occasional *bizarre* falsetto may be pardoned. Not so "The Flight of the Duchess," however, in which a charming and most spiritual tale is told somewhat after the style of an Ingoldsby Legend or a Bab Ballad. It is filled with such rhymes as "tintacks" and "syntax," "stir-up" and "syrup," "news of her" and "Lucifer," and many others equally unsuited to a history at once so serious and so exalted. Here we are confronted with that deliberated oddity which might be termed Mr. Browning's most irritating fault, as it certainly is his least honest one. We see that he has planned all these fire-cracker surprises of diction; they bear slight resemblance to that "rough power" by which his artistic laziness has so often been misnamed. For there is a certain class of critics (and, I regret to add, a large one) who only need the evidence of an author's bad rhymes, haphazard rhythms, and defective constructions, in order to discover that he fairly bristles with "rough power." *Le mot juste*, the polished and accurate utterance, is in severe disrepute with these persons. It has been they who for years have flung their gibes at the unrivalled perfection of Lord Tennyson's verse. Apparently, as they love to put it, the latter had not power because it was not "rough." He was mincing because he never slurred a line; he lacked the higher kind of emotion because he had patiently chiselled his work into a dignity above the frenzies of Byron or the hysteria of Shelley. I sometimes wonder, for my own part, if those cavillers who ring such wearisome changes on this one theme have ever considered how much great power is often at the root of poetical grace. Even if Tennyson were only felicitous (and he is that besides being a very noble poet as well) he would have accomplished much. All the remarkable poets who ever lived have had as much grace as grandeur. Grace is frequently inseparable from grandeur, but when it is not it is never weakness; it is

always strength. The elastic step and flexible form of some delicate maiden may typify an endurance and fortitude not possessed by the sturdiest athlete.

Just as there were thousands of people who would have lost all regard for Carlyle if he had been dowered with a decorous and not an uncouth English idiom, so there are thousands to-day who would consider Mr. Browning's poetry very tame indeed were it not studded with such points of ugliness and idiosyncrasy as those which disfigure "The Flight of the Duchess." But other poems that belong to Mr. Browning's earlier manner, that were published among the two or three collections with which, years ago, he first presented the world, and that deserve deep if not unqualified commendation, are "Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister," "The Confessional," and "Holy-Cross Day." All these are alive with vigor and not always by any means impossible to understand after a second or third reading—which is saying a good deal against them, perhaps, in the opinion of the confirmed Browningite. "Holy-Cross Day" is an especially original and striking presentation of the Jew's degraded condition during the Middle Ages. Nothing can be more trenchant than its incidental sarcasms, nothing more acute than the reproaches it hurls against the bigotries and hypocrisies of its time.

All these better and wiser poems of Mr. Browning appeared many years ago. "Sordello" had, unless I err, preceded them, and from the absurd enigma of that book their comparative clearness was a welcome change. Mr. Browning began to be hailed as a poet emergent from darkness, and in a few quarters bright hopes were entertained of his future. "Sordello," when heeded at all, may have made the cynics jest and the thoughtful look grieved, but we have no record that it had more materially injured the young versifier who had chosen to masquerade in it *en sphinx*. Everybody knows the story of how Barry Cornwall's wife gave him the book during his convalescence after a great illness, and of how he read the first page bewilderedly, then amazedly, and at length in nervous terror. Handing it a little later to his wife, he asked the tremulous question, "What do you make of this?" And when, some fifteen or twenty minutes afterward, Mrs. Procter replied, "I don't understand a word of it," her husband burst forth in delight, "*Thank God I am not mad!*" This tale may or may not be false, but it certainly bears the stamp of probability. I recall, in about my eighteenth year, discrediting the statements I had heard relative to "Sordello's" unintelligibility, and attempting to read the book with a confidence in my own anti-Philistine comprehension of it. But a few pages convinced me that report had not falsified its odious "toughness." Beautiful gleams occur in it, but they are like flying lights over a surface of heavy darkness. Now and then, for twenty lines or so, you feel as if you had smoothly mastered its meaning; again, all is disarray and density. It is like seeing a fine statue reflected in a cracked mirror: here is the curve of a symmetric arm, but you follow it only to meet an abortive bulge of elbow; there is the outline of a sculptured cheek, but you trace below it a repellent deformity of throat; once more you light with joy upon a thigh of faultless moulding, but lower down you are shocked by obese distortion. The whole "poem"

resembles a caricature of some Gothic cathedral, in planning which some demented architect has treated his own madness to a riot of gargoyles. The *ensemble* is monstrous, inexcusable. But, like many of Mr. Browning's later, modern poems, it strikes you as more of a wilful failure than a feeble one.

All the plays of this author were published by him while he was still a young man. He calls himself, in one of his lyrics, "Robert Browning, you writer of plays," and it is evident, from the dramatic spirit informing a great deal of his verse, that he believed himself with extreme seriousness to be a dramatist of high rank. Eulogy untold has indeed been poured upon him in this capacity. Long before the "Browning Craze" had developed its first febrile symptoms, no less an authority than Dickens was reported to have exclaimed, in a burst of enthusiastic reverence, that he would rather have written "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon'" than all the novels to which his name was signed! It seems impossible that the creator of "David Copperfield" could ever have made any such wantonly random declaration. And yet, not very long ago, an English writer of some distinction endeavored to prove that "Strafford," "Colombe's Birthday," and "The Return of the Druses" had been successfully performed before London audiences. They may have been performed, but that they were in any degree successful cannot for an instant be credited. They are not dramas at all; they are no more than dialogues divided arbitrarily into acts. And yet they have been compared to the plays of Shakespeare by several inflammable zealots in the Browning cause. Still, after all, writers have existed who rejoiced, during the past two hundred years, in heaping odium upon Shakespeare as a charlatan, and we all recollect the contempt with which Sir Samuel Pepys wrote of him, not to mention Oliver Goldsmith's freely-expressed disdain in the "Vicar of Wakefield." Thus it becomes apparent that human taste has many foibles and vagaries, and that the blare of a few partisan trumpets cannot do much for the establishment of a genuine literary fame. As for that mightily belauded play "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon,'" it was accorded an admirable oral chance at the Star Theatre in New York, two or three years ago. Mr. Lawrence Barrett took the part of Tresham, and all the other characters, as the newspapers put it, were "in good hands." Mr. Barrett and all his company did their best for the play. At the end of the third act I heard somebody near me murmur that it was "Oh, immensely fine, don't you know, but a closet-play . . . yes, decidedly a closet-play." I could not help asking myself whether the reputation which it had through years enjoyed were not a sort of closet-reputation as well. For my own part, I had heard it somewhat apathetically and mechanically called "marvellous" and "grand" a great many times, before I attempted to read it, by people who used these epithets as though they were somehow pledged to propriety for their correct delivery. But I realize now that it is a work of talented adroitness and little more. There is something curiously professorial and factitious about it, brought forth more clearly by the foot-lights than by perusal, and yet perceptible through either medium. Its "psychology" becomes overburdening, oppressive. Everybody, from the first scene till the

last, is on transcendental stilts; nor is such impression diminished by the blunt, choppy character of Mr. Browning's blank verse. As Tresham is made to fling this forth in sentence after sentence, his character grows more and more unsympathetic. He is meant to be the ideal of honor and nobility, and he gradually becomes to us, during the progress of the piece, more and more of a petulant metaphysician. He says to the seducer of his sister, on finding him at the casement of this lady, about to enter it surreptitiously at night,—

“We should join hands in frantic sympathy
If you once taught me the unteachable,
Explained how you can live so, and so lie.
With God's help I retain, despite my sense,
The old belief—a life like yours is still
Impossible. Now draw.”

Could the far-fetched be carried much further than to make a bluff English cavalier talk (and especially under these conditions of anguish and preoccupation) in a strain of such hair-splitting highfalutinism? As for the killing of Mertoun by Tresham, it becomes, considering his approaching marriage to Mildred, almost ridiculous as a tragic expedient. We cannot but feel how much safer than a *femme couverte* that sister, married to her imprudent boyish lover, would have remained for the rest of her life. And regarding the way in which Mildred not merely forgives but *blesses* the slayer of him whom she worshipped, I will venture to affirm that there was not a single auditor in the Star Theatre on the night of the performance to which I have alluded, who did not feel that here a note of the very falsest exaggeration had been struck. But the “Browning Craze” was in full fury at that time, and perhaps not a few qualms of natural dislike were loyally repressed. Of the many incontestable merits that belong to “A Blot in the ‘Scutcheon” I will not speak: for a quarter of a century the world has had these dinned into its ears, and alike the friends and foes of Mr. Browning should by this time be well acquainted with them. They are not, in my own judgment, at all equal to the praise with which they have been so lavishly greeted. The play is at best three acts of inexorable grimness, lit by not one ray of humor. To have compared it with any of Shakespeare's masterpieces was by no means a friendly office to perform toward it, since time is apt to avenge such mistakes rather harshly. Perhaps the retribution may be quite tardy in coming: it usually is. *La vengeance est un plat qui se mange froid.* But in the end it is apt to come. No amount of thrifty bushes may reconcile the daintier palate to inferior wine, though when it is good it may need no bush at all.

“Pippa Passes” deserves mention as the most charming of its writer's plays; but, with the exception of “Paracelsus” (a very voluminous affair, full of untold tedium), it is perhaps the least “actable” of them all. It is, however, a most delightful production, and the only member of its group, I should say, which has not been rated far above its deserts. The others attempt to be plays and are not; they drag; they are over-subtle; they lack freshness or attractiveness of story.

But "Pippa Passes," an airy, graceful, and yet deeply significant composition, succeeds, somehow, in being a play without the slightest apparent effort. That it will not act is nothing derogatory to it, for the same view could sensibly be held of "The Tempest."

With these more youthful achievements it might be said that the fame of Mr. Browning passed through its primary phase. His name, between twenty and thirty years ago, was rarely spoken without an accent of mingled admiration and amusement. Few except silly adulators failed to admit his grave and glaring faults; few except those whom such faults drove back from an acquaintance with him, failed to perceive that he was dowered with extraordinary natural gifts. By such a poem as "In a Gondola" he had won his right to the highest future recognition. "In a Gondola" was marred by follies of conception and execution, but it seemed to foretell a great deal, and it was a dramatic lyric that now and then pierced and enraptured its reader. Much of it was superb, and other portions were almost puerile in their fantastic heedlessness of performance. There was, up to this point, no doubt that Mr. Browning could sing with a new voice, but at the same time a voice clogged by discordant notes. Would he ever rid himself of those notes through a careful study of what art really meant? Would he cast aside all his semi-barbarous peculiarities and rise divested of their encumbering mannerisms?

"The Ring and the Book" proved otherwise. Mr. Browning, with an immense challenge, flung scorn in the face of those who had hoped the brightest things for his poetic future.

At the time "The Ring and the Book" appeared, Tennyson had set the spire upon his cathedral of majestic song. He had written "Maud," and its novelty of melody had enchanted thousands; he had written "The Princess," and its prismatic yet potent verses were known and loved countless miles past the rainy little isle in which he had conceived them; he had made "In Memoriam" break like a sea upon a thousand shores of thought, throb amid countless caves of speculation and yearning, sob amid unnumbered reaches of passion and regret. Tennyson's fame had already based itself upon undying pediments. Mr. Browning was expected by a few earnest adherents to surpass the Laureate. Another effort came from him, and as "The Ring and the Book" this effort was promptly *obsédé* with flattering bravos.

But what, after all, was it, this "Ring and the Book"? I recall spending a whole summer in trying to make myself believe that it was a great poem. I was then about three-and-twenty years old, and many reviews had counselled me into crediting that it was something worthy to be put side-and-side with Milton, Dante, and Heaven knows whom else in the way of epic splendor. I am tempted to write now with the boyish animus that filled me then, but in doing so I must first record that I respected the reviewers very fervently and wanted to prove I was their mate in funds of devout appreciation. And how I did struggle to bring about this result! How I beat back the promptings of my better judgment! How I insisted upon assuring myself that such and such a line was not brutally obscure! How I strove to convince myself that the telling of the same story over and over again, even

though different mouths thus told it, was not a travesty upon analytic poignancy! I was in that servile mood toward the newspaper critics then, which may in a measure account for my persistent distrust during later years. . . . And at last my good angel informed me, toward autumn, that I had wasted my summer, that language was never given us to conceal our thought, and that every artist must either seek to strengthen his expression through the clarification of it or be content to have oblivion punish him for such neglect.

"The Ring and the Book" was *le commencement de la fin* with Mr. Browning. It must have made him somewhat like the hero in his own praiseworthy poem, "A Lost Leader," and cost him many rational devotees. But it gained him others. His final poetic step had been taken. He was going to yield himself to freaks and whims; he intended to despise the artist and cultivate the *poseur*.

He has cultivated the *poseur*, nearly always, ever since.

I do not deny the brilliancy of his mistake in writing "The Ring and the Book." To refuse force to that work would be like refusing force to a cyclone. But a cyclone is not a poem. Perhaps nothing so daringly prolix has ever been perpetrated in the whole range of English literature. Hidden away amid the quartz-like Browningese of the text lies many a diamond of thought and song. But reading and mining are two different occupations. One cannot well conceive of "The Ring and the Book" dying. Death will probably not be its fate, but a protracted oblivion instead. Fashion makes people read it and talk about it now, but fashion is often another name for forgetfulness. Human patience will not endure its endless repetitions of the same theme, its terribly tiresome presentations of one bloody and unsavory tale at different angles of vision. You can scarcely see in the whole massive bulk and plan of this metrical monstrosity any trace of the humor which Mr. Browning has occasionally shown elsewhere; a keener humorous sense would, I think, have saved him from the attempt to saddle poor posterity with so cumbrous a burden. Nor is Mr. Browning's blank verse, even when most clear of meaning, an agreeable species of invention. It is original enough; its ear-marks are not to be confounded with those of any other poet; but when least marred by parentheses, inversions, *quos egos*, and ellipses, it is almost never free from a particular trick or conceit, which grows, after incessant recurrence, as much a monotony as an aggravation. This consists in making one substantive stand for several verbs, each verb being at the root, so to speak, of a new and distinct sentence, but all sentences being huddled together in a way that sometimes renders turbid the simplest thought. Let us try to find an instance or two of this painful peculiarity. Take the following, for example, from "The Ring and the Book:"

The Canon Caponsacchi, then, was sent
To change his garb, re-trim his tonsure, tie
The clerkly silk round every plait correct,
Make the impressive entry on his place
Of relegation. . .

Or this, from a like source :

What if he gained thus much,
Wrung out this sweet drop from the bitter Past,
Bore off this rose-bud from the prickly brake
To justify such torn clothes and scratched hands,
And, after all, brought something back from Rome?

But the illustrations of this most infelicitous tendency could be made to cover pages. And we are now accepting Mr. Browning's blank verse at its best, not at its worst. Its worst is sometimes positively horrifying. Surely the man should have a very wondrous message for humanity who aims to deliver this message as a poet and yet continually scorns to do so as an artist. But, after all, who of us has a hard enough conscience to grant that the artist and the poet are ever separable? Whatever his mentality, his reach of spiritual vision, his command of pungent and illuminative epithet, how shall a writer presume to disdain form in searching after the expression of truth? *Quand on se bat on ne choisit pas ses armes* may reasonably explain the method of some hot contestant against a political or social wrong. But when the poet fights what he believes to be worst error, are we not justified in expecting from him a well-burnished blade and a wrist whose turns reveal both dexterity and harmonious movement? To the merest beginner in verse-making it is commonly understood that clashes of consonants are the sorriest destruction of melody. He must avoid them if he wishes to write presentable or reputable iambs. And yet Mr. Browning outrages taste in the following lines, taken at random from his works, where remain innumerable other specimens, just as dissonant, strident, and sibilant :

It strikes a Fourth, a Fifth thrusts in its nose . . .
Two must discept—has distinguished . . .
God's gold just shining its last where that lodges . . .
Billets that blaze substantial and slow . . .
The Knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed . . .
Fear which stings ease . . .
"You are sick, that's sure," they say . . .
Who breasted, beat Barbarians, stemmed Persia rolling on . . .
To a city bears a fall'n host's woes . . .
Wagner, Dvorak, Liszt—to where—trumpets, shawms . . .
Adjudges such—how canst thou,—this wise bound . . .

And finally, from "Ferishtah's Fancies,"

When my *lips just touched* your cheek . . .

The italics here are my own ; for although the consonantal gruffness in this last quoted line is not so striking as that of many which have preceded it, the contrast between its tender sentiment and its coarsely unmelodic versification affects one like a vulgar slap in the face.

Multitudes of other similar lines exist throughout Mr. Browning's copious work. And I cannot see how any vigor of idea can excuse such feebleness of presentation. Surely nature and life, which are so akin to art, do not demand of us an indulgence for such unhappy imperfection. Because a gnarled and blasted tree bears a few sprays of fresh and glossy leaves we do not gaze upon it to the neglect of healthful surrounding growths. Because we know that a child or a woman possesses mental charms we do not tolerate a waspish acerbity of phrase in either. But from art we exact the nearest approach to perfection, not the most zigzag deviation from it. Poetic fame has no pathway to its temple like that traditional one to a forlorn goal; it is not paved with good intentions; we insist, indeed, upon its being quarried from the very marbles of Pentelicus.

Mr. Browning's published writing since "The Ring and the Book" need not be dwelt upon in this essay. Those loyal maniacs to the "Browning Craze" have their own Bedlamite reasons, no doubt, for admiring "Red Cotton Night-Cap Country" and "The Inn Album." And, after all, what (in America, at least) does the "Browning Craze" signify? The spirit of American culture has always been an imitative one, and not seldom to a snobbish degree. It was quite in the order of things that the "Browning Craze" should rise in London, flow a westerly course, and empty into Chicago. But it submerged Boston on its way,—or at least partially so. I have no doubt that in both cities the societies which have been its offspring possess many intelligent and sincere members. But it is very improbable that all these members are either intelligent or sincere. One might confidently assert that a great many of them are clouded by dulness and tintured with toadyism. It does not require much brains for anybody to perceive that the assumption of a certain taste will produce the appearance of exclusiveness on the part of such an assumer. The jargon of the art-schools, for example, is easily caught, and at almost any exhibition of foreign paintings you will discover that some picture which the general public would turn from as unpardonably quaint, rococo, or audacious will attract a little *coterie* of fervid adorers. Perhaps a few of these may honestly believe that the painter in question is a towering genius; but the majority are yearning to anoint his locks with spikenard and myrrh solely because he is considered "caviare to the general," above the vulgar herd, *et hoc genus omne*. It is doubtful whether the Browning societies of England have gained as many recruits from any other cliques or associations as from those whom Mr. Gilbert has so mercilessly satirized as the *Æsthetes*. But to be an *æsthete* is by no means to be a fool. These persons laugh among each other at the caricatures into which they turn themselves, very much as we are informed that the two augurs did of old. Possibly the Browningites laugh now and then among each other at the solemn importance with which they are supposed to inform the digging out of a poor tortured thought from beneath crushing layers of words. And when they reflect at all seriously upon their undertakings and their achievements, the result certainly cannot be very edifying. To become a Browningite is indeed not to have distinguished one's self for much sense, either common or uncommon. Hero-worship

is always an unwholesome occupation, even if the hero shine with a truly glorious light. Yet in the case of Mr. Browning there is no glorious light at all, but one put under a bushel, and put there with not a little of the same insufferable vanity that made Diogenes take up his abode in a tub. There are very few broad-minded and unaffected people who have read Mr. Browning's poetry, or the worthier portion of it, who would not be willing unhesitatingly to tell us that he might have grown a poet of wide and persistent fame. But he has chosen so to mantle himself in the most rash and headlong moods of obscurity, he has so trivialized, cheapened, and frittered away the talents which might have made him serve efficiently the magnificent art he professes to revere, that his laurels will turn dry and brittle long before another century has dealt with his present renown. Meanwhile he has a kind of adulation to-day, but one with which no true artist should be content. Indeed, the author of "Fifine at the Fair" and "Pacchiarotto" is no longer an artist, though he who wrote "Pippa Passes" and "Love among the Ruins" may once have closely approximated to such a distinction. He may not be aware of the biting and discreditable fact, but hundreds of those who now "study" and "cultivate" him are beings of the kind who would rave hysterically over some headless and armless torso, if thoroughly sure that the *leve vulgus* would not presume to join in their pedantic chorus, after so forlorn a fragment of sculpture had been excavated and set up for popular inspection.

That Mr. Browning is a poet representative of the age in which he now so eminently flourishes cannot with any fairness be conceded. His work makes one point plain, though it leaves so many others in darkness. The impetus of rationalistic thought seems hardly to have touched him. He is an orthodox believer of the most acquiescent type, as his "Christmas Eve and Easter Day" would conclusively reveal, apart from hundreds of other evidences throughout the vast volume of his work. The sinewy scientific push of his time has left him conservatively unaffected. He regards the priceless teachings of such men as Herbert Spencer, Buckle, Tyndall, Huxley, and Lecky with as much unconcern as if he were a clergyman sanctified by the most rigid Church-of-England orders. No qualm of doubt regarding the Thirty-Nine Articles appears ever to disturb him. He is just as pious as he is frequently opaque. He refers to God with that familiarity of personal acquaintanceship which might distinguish our own Dr. Talmage. He is perfectly sure and satisfied on the question not only of an anthropomorphic deity but on that of a future immortality, accountability, pardon, and punishment. A good deal of his vagueness is like that of the current theological treatise; to the consistent and logical agnostic of our time it means nearly the same thing. Those who want their modern poets to be men permeated by the so-called materialism of the century will not find a poet after their own heart in a singer to whom the divinity of Christ is romantically indisputable. For some minds it will seem difficult to accept this kind of poet as great, at an epoch when English philosophy has drawn so sharp a limit before the abyss of the Unknowable. Mr. Browning might be inclined to shift the entire burden of ecclesiastic responsibility off his shoulders by

declaring that he does not speak for himself but for his countless dramatic characters; and yet he speaks through no lips except his own when he says, with *a priori* dogmatism,—

God's work, be sure,
No more spreads wasted than falls scant!
He filled, did not exceed, man's want
Of beauty in this life.

And again,—

—So hapt
My chance. HE stood there. Like the smoke
Pillared o'er Sodom when day broke,—
I saw Him. One magnific pall
Mantled in massive fold and fall
His dread, and coiled in snaky swathes
About his feet: night's black, that bathes
All else, broke, grizzled with despair,
Against the soul of blackness there.
A gesture told the mood within—
That wrapped right hand which based the chin,
That intense meditation fixed
On his procedure,—pity mixed
With the fulfilment of decree.
Motionless, thus, he spoke to me,
Who fell before his feet, a mass,
No man now.

Bugabooism could not go much further than this. There is something Calvinistic in these words, emanant soon afterward from the mouth of a palpable and tangible deity:

In the roll
Of judgment which convinced mankind
Of sin, stood many, bold and blind,
Terror must burn the truth into. . . .

These and like passages indicate unmistakably that Mr. Browning accepts Christianity in not a few of its most conventional forms. This may be all well enough; it is quite the gentleman's own business if he goes regularly to church every Sunday and hears a sermon less involved as to meaning than one of his own poems and at times considerably more grammatical. But it would be idle to claim that he who exhibits this theologic passivity, this religious complaisance, can be said to rank at all abreast of his period as a strenuous and catholic thinker. It is true that the most amazing doctrines exist with regard to the right province of poetry and the fitting equipments of poets, and a multitude of critics, otherwise quite credible, will tell you that it is not half so necessary for the poet to think as to feel. But thinking and feeling, as modern science explains, are pretty nearly one and the same thing. Wordsworthian "inspiration" is not esteemed so highly as it was forty years ago. The canons and requisitions of art, however, remain unaltered. Emotion is still a splendidly reputable factor in all poetry when governed by that self-control which is the secret equally of Shakespeare's best verse as it is of Longfellow's or Lord Tennyson's.

License of expression has been so often and imprudently praised in poets that an unfortunate abuse of latitude has become far too manifest among English-speaking circles of them. Who has not heard the contemptuous declaration that "there is more truth than poetry" in such and such a statement? If scientific investigation is the reigning intellectual stimulus of our nineteenth century, that is very far from being a cause why poetry should perish. For poetry, we now perceive, is not to be defined as Milton (a great poet) defined it, or as Poe (a very poor one) also defined it. Poetry is life, as all literature is life. But it is life in this different way from the rest of literature, that over it is flung the influence of beauty, and so the phases of human experience are made in turn sublimely, tenderly, or pathetically noteworthy. This influence is like a transfiguring light; it is presentment, treatment, in a certain limited meaning, enchantment. The subject itself may be more or less susceptible of elevation. Byron had merely to let this light play over such a subject as Venice, Lake Leman, Petrarch's tomb, the stars of heaven, or a storm in the Jura Alps, and enthraling poetic pictures glowed with vividness before the mind. But Burns, as his admirers assert, made a mouse immortal by precisely the same means. Often you hear it affirmed that this or that subject cannot be dealt with by poetry, that it is too mean, too inferior, too recondite, too coarse, too prosaic. In these cases the transfiguring light has been more difficult to throw, or perhaps the imaginative flame and lenses whence it has taken origin have been ill fed and ill managed. The more un-ideal the subject the harder to idealize it, to turn it into poetry. And yet we have seen Shakespeare in his creation of "Caliban," Milton in his "Satan," Coleridge in his "Ancient Mariner," and Lord Tennyson in his "Vision of Sin," envelop the uncanny and repulsive with a raiment as of magical tissue. Students of French poetry will remember "*La Charogne*" of Baudelaire, a poem which has always struck me with the same effect as would a moonlit dung-heap. I do not applaud, or even suggest an approval of, such poetry. But if the dung-heap is there, so, somehow, is the moonlight; and who that has read this thrilling poem can forget the melody and eloquence of its last stanza?—

*Alors, O ma beauté, dites à la vermine
Qui te mangera de baisers,
Que je garde la forme et l'essence divine
De mes amours décomposés !*

The English have, as Mr. Browning's own famous wife said of them, in her "Aurora Leigh,"

A scornful insular way
Of calling the French light.

But, notwithstanding this alleged Gallic lightness, I do not believe it would be possible for a "Sordello," an "Inn Album," a "Red Cotton Night-Cap Country," or even a "Ring and the Book," to have appeared in French without promptly being crushed by the heaviest judicial censure. And what rigid, healthy, uncompromising lessons would Mr. Browning have been taught if he had been born a French-

man! Not that he could not have learned excellent lessons while still remaining an Englishman. But as a writer of French verse his crimes against style would have suffered condign and relentless punishment. The French would either have long ago made it impossible for him to attain the least celebrity, writing as he has written, or they would have trained and taught him by the simple yet forcible formula that no great poet can ever achieve greatness through the wilful wrapping up of his meaning. And this is the sin which Mr. Browning has repeatedly, unrepentingly committed. The "Craze" which he has succeeded in rousing is one of those inexplicable drifts of literary fashion that mark, both here and in England, our strange passing century. But in England it is not their first similar mistake. They crowned and then dis-crowned poor Sidney Dobell; they raved over and then flouted Alexander Smith; they lifted Gerald Massey upon a lyric pedestal only to hurl him downward a little later. For us Americans to catch this curious fever is far less excusable, and a good deal of fatuous, cringing Anglomania is at the bottom of it. To-day we are devoutly imitating British perversity in our genuflection before a very ordinary Russian novelist named Tolstoi, and both writing and speaking of that sketchy, padded, interminable tale, "*Anna Karénina*," as if it were really a classic masterpiece. But the gods, as everybody knows, are very angry at the idea of an International Copyright, and in their animosity they seem to have made the American reader their diligent abettor. Until the American reader pays less attention to the curiosities of transatlantic literature and more to the honest efforts enshrined within his own, we cannot hope for much chance of his even desiring that Congress shall do her work of reparation and atonement. He might not, after all, find it so very unpalatable to exchange his "Browning Craze" for an Emerson one. Emerson was a great deal more spiritual poet than is Mr. Browning, and yet quite as virile. He had the faculty, also, of conveying his thoughts neither in spasms nor mysticisms. Moreover, he is a wonderfully stimulating writer to other minds, and debates and discussions that took either his prose or verse as their text might perhaps bring just as much profit as wading through pages that too often seem but a turbulent brawl and snarl of verbiage.

One of the most distressing features about Mr. Browning's existent reputation—distressing, I mean, to those who discern and measure its basis of humbug—is the way in which his admirers are never tired of saying that it wholly outshines the renown of Lord Tennyson and that its possessor has touched, thus far in our century, the high-tide mark of English poetry. So, until not very long since, fanatics cried that Carlyle, with his barbarisms, loomed above that most masterly and dignified of writers, Macaulay; but now the brief prejudice of the hour has passed, and the morrows have begun to dole out equity, as they generally do, with no matter how tardy a service.

Never was a greater literary injustice perpetrated than the placing of Mr. Browning above Lord Tennyson. The Laureate has indeed served his art with a profound and lovely fidelity, while it is no exaggeration to state of Mr. Browning that he has not seldom insulted his as though it were a pickpocket. "In a Gondola" may be a fine love-

lyric; but who would compare its halting ruggedness to the fairy music of "The Day-Dream"? Only the people who profess to like the Venus of Milo better without her lost arms than with them—the people to whom deficiency and inadequacy are held dearer than flawlessness and finish. A passion for Mr. Browning's work has frequently been one of the refuges of mediocrity. You are thrown, as it were, with a mixed but rather patrician society of, let us say . . . invalids, in the same asylum. And it is such a mild, elegant sort of lunacy! Nobody is very much in earnest, after all. They have learned, most of them, to look as if they thought "A Pillar at Sebzevat" luminiferous reading and "Jochanan Hakkadosh" a model of perspicuity. If you say to them that Mr. Browning has never produced a poem half so grand as the "Ode on the Duke of Wellington" they appear to feel so sorry for you that you begin to feel sorry, yourself, for having drawn thus largely, if unintentionally, upon the funds of their compassion. And yet bid them to show you where, throughout all Mr. Browning's dramatic idyls, dramatic lyrics, and dramatic everything else, there are poems that so burn with beauty as the monologues of "Æone," of "Tithonus," of "The Miller's Daughter," of "Maud," of "The Dream of Fair Women," of "The Palace of Art," of "St. Simeon Stylites," of "The Gardener's Daughter," of "Sir Galahad," and they will be apt to give you response as indefinite as if it had been taken from some of their great master's verse. For all these poems just mentioned are monologues; all, in varying degrees, are essentially dramatic. Tennyson chose, until his later life, to ignore the writing of drama; but if he had attempted, in the full flush of his masterly vigor, to produce a "Cup," a "Harold," or a "Queen Mary," there cannot be much real question as to whether he would or would not have eclipsed "Colombe's Birthday" and "King Victor and King Charles." I can ill imagine how any actual artist would not instantly make up his mind to retain "In Memoriam" and "The Princess" (those two inestimable marvels) even if by doing so he were threatened with the loss of everything that Mr. Browning has ever done, from the murky glooms of "Sordello" down to the recent most indolently-scribbled "Parleyings." And as for those four incomparable "Idyls of the King"—"Enid," "Elaine," "Vivien," and "Guinevere"—where amid the bristling entanglements of such verse as that published by the author of "Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau" shall we reach either their peers or their semblances?

Scientific criticism, which is the only kind meriting both credence and respect, will one day, perhaps, demonstrate much of what I have here only postulated, without aspiring logically to prove. And when such an event occurs it should strike a telling blow at the languor which enervates a large proportion of those readers who have permitted their tastes to play very fantastic tricks with them. There is no objection to the hottest rebellion against purity and sanity of method among iconoclasts who would replace gentle order by dangerous misrule; it is only when anarchy gets into the high places of literature and begins its assaults, mutilations, and subversions there that the intemperate are led to exult and the judicious to deplore. Still, progress, that arrives at so many of her destinations by circuitous paths, may be trusted yet again

to set the crooked straight. It deserves to be held as probable that she is at the present date mystically concerning herself with a future demolition of the "Browning Craze," and that her action may be speedy is a likelihood which all consistent optimists ought to place well up on the list of their rosiest hopes.

Edgar Fawcett.

HOLYROOD.

PROUD palace, cherished home of kings,
How fallen is thy glory now!
Within thy walls no minstrel sings,
The crown is torn from off thy brow.

No gallant treads with stately pace
Along thy memorable floors;
The sunlight of no princess' face
Illumes the dusk that dims thy doors.

But day by day the common crowd,
A jostling, peering, prying brood,
With idle words and laughter loud
Invades thy chambers, Holyrood!

Ah, how her eyes would flash with flame
Could she but view the noisy scene,
She whom with pity all men name,
Mary, the sad and lovely queen!

Now with her foe of days that were,
Suspicious, vain Elizabeth,
She rests in stately Westminster
Amid the royal pomp of death.

Yet who can say when midnight knells
From some gray church's hollow tower,
And one by one the answering bells
In silvery echo sound the hour,

But that her spirit, stoled in white,
Glides through the halls with footsteps slow,
And stands long in the lonely night
Where lay the murdered Rizzio?

Clinton Scollard.

THE PREFERENCES OF OUR OPERA-SINGERS.

CURIOSITY is one of the cardinal characteristics of mankind. It might have been in Pandora's box among the many evils that were to afflict humanity when the venturesome lady opened the casket, had not the peculiar symptoms of the trait been displayed in the preliminary act of the "all-gifted woman." However, if Curiosity was in the box of evils it certainly could not have been buried very deep in crime, but must have slipped lightly out from the top and spread rapidly over the world, and, being light, superficial, and common, is not regarded with much abhorrence.

It was partly the recognition of this prevalence of curiosity among the general public that induced the writer to secure a series of letters from the leading artists of the operatic stage regarding their personal preferences for the music they have occasion to sing, but the stronger inducement was the feeling that such a series would be of historical value now and in the future. There is more than the mere gratification of ephemeral interest in the knowledge of the favorite rôles and songs of representative musicians: there is the concentrated expression of the musical status of the age. In the present list are embodied the personal candid and carefully-considered statements of the leaders in the various departments of operatic entertainment that to-day hold the American stage.

The perusal of the list will give a keener insight into the minds of our musicians than might at first be imagined. It was not very long ago that one of the auditors at the last "Patti Farewell" disparagingly said, after "La Diva" had finished her deliciously pensive rendering of John Howard Payne's immortal melody, "It is all acting. Her soul is not in the song. Without doubt she is inwardly laughing at the impression her pathetic singing makes upon the audience." The reading of Mme. Patti's letter will quickly dispel such ill-judged ideas. Again, the comedian of the stage is naturally supposed to hold as his favorite songs those humorous melodies with which he wins the most applause; he sings them so well, people say, that he must be thoroughly enjoying the sentiment of words and music. And yet Mr. Barnabee, the best-known comedian of the lyric stage, writes that his liking is for the sombre style of composition.

The number of operatic stars in this country in comparison with the number of dramatic stars is very limited, while the number of lyric companies in comparison with the number of dramatic companies is still more limited. The present fashion of the drama allows one leading actor to be sufficient for a travelling organization: fortunately, the actual necessities as well as the prevailing custom of the operatic stage will not admit of such an unsatisfactory system. We therefore find several of the representative vocalists in each of the representative opera-companies. From these an expression of personal preference has been

obtained, and in this way a broad idea of the standing of music, in all its branches, in America has been outlined.

Two questions were formulated for answer. They were:

1. What is your favorite character (or characters, if more than one) in opera?

2. What solo is your favorite, either for the sentiment that is in it or for its effect upon the audience?

ADELINA PATTI.

Mme. Adelina Patti might well be called the world's songstress, so cosmopolitan has she become through her musical pilgrimages, but as a representative singer the Diva may be chosen to stand as the apostle of the Italian opera in America. Very aptly, though of course at the time without prophetic premonition, Adelina Patti made her *début* upon the stage of that opera-house which was to be of greatest use in fostering Italian opera in America, and which at the time of her *début* (1859) had been opened only a short time,—the Academy of Music of New York. It was in "Lucia di Lammermoor" she appeared as a *débutante*; and possibly that fact leads to the favoritism which she expresses for Donizetti's work. Her *répertoire* is an extended one, with "Sonnambula," "Traviata," "Linda di Chamounix," "Rigoletto," "Trovatore," "Barbiere," "Martha," "Faust," "Semiramide," "Huguenots," "Aida," "Don Pasquale," "Pardon de Ploërmel," "Etoile du Nord," "Romeo et Juliette," and others of similar varying character, some well known and some less familiar to the general public. Mme. Patti writes:

"MONSIEUR,—

"In response to your esteemed letter, Mme. Patti returns thanks for your kind solicitude on her account, and transmits to you the reply to the questions which you made of her.

"1. Her favorite operas are 'Semiramide' and 'Barbiere' of Rossini, 'Traviata' and 'Aida' of Verdi, 'Lucia' and 'Linda' of Donizetti.

"2. Her favorite airs are, in the first place, 'Home, Sweet Home,' and 'The Last Rose of Summer' ('Martha'); in general, all those that are beautiful and in consequence exceptionally inviting to the nature of an artiste.

"Happy if these statements prove of service to you, it remains, monsieur, to beg you to accept the assurance of the regard of

"ADELINA PATTI."

EMY FURSCH-MADI.

Although Mme. Fursch-Madi is accomplished in the Italian, German, and French schools of opera, as well as in oratorio-work, yet from her position in connection with the American and National Opera Companies she should be regarded as the representative of the English school, and more particularly, through her natural qualifications, of the dramatic branch of operatic singing. The high order of classical music forms

her especial forte, though her artistic singing is capable of the best results in any department. That she regards "Aida" with favor is not to be wondered at, since she was chosen by Verdi to create the title-rôle on the first production of the opera in Brussels. Her list of characters includes Valentine in the "Huguenots," Donna Anna in "Don Giovanni," Ortruda in "Lohengrin," and then Marguerite in "Faust," Leonora in "Trovatore," Laura in "La Gioconda," Alice in "Robert le Diable," besides the heroines of "L'Africaine," "Norma," and many other standard works of to-day. Mme. Fursch-Madi writes:

"DEAR SIR,—

"Your first question is somewhat embarrassing; for, to speak candidly, I like all the rôles of my répertoire about the same. However, I would say that you may choose from any of the following, with the assurance that I will not disappoint you: 'Africaine,' Norma, Aida, and Donna Anna in 'Don Giovanni.'

"It is easier to reply to your second question, as the air I prefer above all is that of Beethoven, 'Ah! perfido.'

"As regards the air which produces the greatest effect upon an audience, I really do not know how to answer. I have travelled through Europe, singing everywhere; I have made concert tours with Thomas and Gericke from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to New Orleans; and as there are no two persons in the world whose noses have exactly the same form, so I have not seen as yet two cities in which the popular taste was precisely similar.

"I do not know whether my answer will prove satisfactory or not, but I am so eclectic in all questions of art that nothing embarrasses me more than to be obliged to state my preferences. The boundless admiration which I feel for Beethoven does not prevent me from adoring Mozart and Mendelssohn; and if I have a great predilection for Gluck, Meyerbeer, and Weber, I have none the less fervent admiration for Wagner.

Yours respectfully,

"EMY FURSCH-MADI."

EMMA JUCH.

Miss Emma Juch's refined interpretations of the gentlest characters place her as the representative of the delicate rôles of high opera in contrast with the more dramatic rôles of her companion in the National Opera Company. Her choice was from a list of no short limit. As Eurydice she has followed Orpheus back towards the realms of earth; as Senta she has yearned for the love of the Flying Dutchman; as Martha she has bewitched honest young Lionel; as Marguerite she has displayed most touching love for ill-requiting Faust, and as Elsa has shown an equal tenderness for the Knight of the Holy Grail. She has, too, her Violetta in "Traviata," Isabella in "Robert le Diable," Pamina in the "Magic Flute," and Queen in the "Huguenots." From these she selects those two characters in which unmistakably the public like to see her. Miss Juch writes:

"DEAR SIR,—

"In reply to your two questions I beg to offer the following. It being granted that one's favorite rôles are based upon these points, viz., that they particularly suit the voice, physique, and temperament of the singer, that the music possesses beauty and sterling worth, and that they seem to be most acceptable to the public, I unhesitatingly name first Senta in 'The Flying Dutchman' of Wagner, and second Marguerite in Gounod's 'Faust.' I place first the rôle of Senta for its unswerving steadfastness of purpose and devotion to an ideal, and for its grateful music; Marguerite for its purity and frankness, for her misfortune, and because no other rôle in opera probably meets with so sympathetic a response from audiences.

"Regarding my favorite solo, I am really at a loss for an answer, for I find I cannot decide. In my concert-career during the past three years my favorite selections have been made chiefly from Mozart, Weber, Beethoven, Spohr, Liszt, and Rubinstein.

Very sincerely,
"EMMA JUCH."

ZÉLIE DE LUSSAN.

Mlle. Zélie de Lussan would without doubt be chosen by popular vote the representative singer in light English opera. Her piquant acting and attractive voice have gained that favor, while as the prima donna of the Ideal Opera Company she holds the leading place in one of the well-known musical organizations of lighter style. Her more familiar rôles are those of Fanchette in "Victor, the Blue-Stocking," otherwise known as "Fantine," Adina in Donizetti's "Elixir of Love," Arline in the "Bohemian Girl," and Zerlina in "Fra Diavolo," and naturally from these best-known parts she makes her selections. Mlle. de Lussan writes :

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"First, and for a variety of reasons, I like Zerlina in 'Fra Diavolo' both dramatically and musically. I consider it a rôle worthy of the best endeavors of any artiste, and, having won great success in it myself, I probably have an added fondness for it on that account. My portrayal of Zerlina is in no sense mimetic, as I had never seen any other in the rôle up to the time of my initial performance of it, and since that date I have never had reason to materially change my conception of it. To me the bedchamber scene is an opportunity not for suggestiveness, but for refinement and true delicacy of dramatic art. I have no admiration for a coarse or even boisterous Zerlina.

"Hardly a less pronounced favorite of mine is Adina in the 'Elixir of Love,' a rôle which gives one a splendid opportunity for the display of vocal execution and on the dramatic side an equally good opportunity for the simulation of coquetry and *naïveté*.

"My favorite song for effectiveness is called 'Sweetheart,' written especially for me, and interpolated in the second act of the 'Elixir of Love.' My favorite solo from an artistic stand-point is Zerlina's opening number in the second act of 'Fra Diavolo.'

"With regards, believe me, my dear sir,

"Yours truly, ZÉLIE DE LUSSAN."

EMMA ABBOTT.

One of the best-known operatic artists of the day is Emma Abbott, whose continued appearance in the theatres of the country from New York to San Francisco has kept her always before the public. Her répertoire, past and present, is familiar,—“Lucia,” “Faust,” “Traviata,” “Paul and Virginia,” “Mignon:” the list would be merely a repetition of works that have done good service for all operatic stars. Miss Abbott writes:

“DEAR SIR,—

“The operas which I prefer are ‘Lucia,’ ‘Traviata,’ and ‘Mignon.’

“The ballads which I think contain the tenderest sentiment and always touch the hearts of the people are ‘The Last Rose of Summer,’ ‘Home, Sweet Home,’ and ‘Auld Lang Syne.’

“Faithfully yours,

“EMMA ABBOTT.”

MYRON W. WHITNEY.

The noble voice of Myron W. Whitney has been heard in oratorio, in comic opera, and in light classical opera, but in the past two seasons he was a representative leader of the National Company in high opera. A few years ago he was seen only in characters of the less impressive order,—Gaspard in the “Chimes of Normandy,” the Pirate Chief in the “Pirates of Penzance,” Count Kantchukoff in “Fatinitza,” Captain Corcoran in “Pinafore,” Mourzouk in “Giroflé-Girofla,” and also in Herr Bettman in “Czar and Carpenter,” and Count Arnheim in the “Bohemian Girl.” His parts of late have given more scope for vocal display, impersonating as he has Henry I. in “Lohengrin,” Serastro in the “Magic Flute,” Daland in the “Flying Dutchman,” Mr. Page in the “Merry Wives of Windsor,” Marcel in the “Huguenots,” and Ramfis in “Aida.” From these he chooses two parts for which he is eminently fitted, and in which he is eminently successful. Mr. Whitney writes:

“DEAR SIR,—

“In answer to your inquiry, what is my favorite character, or characters, in opera, I will say that Serastro in the ‘Magic Flute’ and Marcel in the ‘Huguenots’ are my favorite parts. And I should say that ‘The Three Fishers’ by Kingsley and ‘The Two Grenadiers’ by Schumann are my most effective songs out of opera.

“Very truly yours,

“M. W. WHITNEY.”

HENRY C. BARNABEE.

To Henry C. Barnabee must be awarded the praise of having done more for the entertainment of his fellow-men than any other musical artist on the American stage. In the once flourishing Lyceum he made his audiences laugh for hours while he impersonated the “Unprotected

Female," or sang "The Cork Leg," "Brown's Serenade," and "Blue-Beard," or told in inimitable style an anecdote the more full of fun because Barnabee was the exponent of its humor. Since then, as a leader in the Ideal Opera Company and The Bostonians, he has earned the title of a representative comedian. His répertoire invades the precincts of nearly all the known light operas. He has sung as Sir Joseph Porter in the immortal "Pinafore," and has danced through the rôle of Izzet Pasha in "Fatinitza." He has posed as Bunthorne in "Patience," and has rattled through the lines of the modern Major-General in the "Pirates of Penzance." Lord Allcash in "Fra Diavolo," Don Bolero in "Giroflé-Girofla," Marquis de Palsambleau in "Victor," John Wellington Wells in the "Sorcerer," Don Japhet in "Giralda," Lorenzo in the "Mascot," Duc des Ifs in "Olivette,"—these and others have fallen to his lot through the sagacity of the stage manager and the demands of the people. Mr. Barnabee writes :

"DEAR SIR,—

"My favorite characters have been John Wellington Wells in the 'Sorcerer,' Izzet Pasha in 'Fatinitza,' and Bunthorne in 'Patience,' the elaboration of the latter giving me, despite intense nervousness, the utmost enjoyment. Of the characters I now represent I consider Lord Allcash in 'Fra Diavolo' the most artistic.

"Of the songs the one with which my name is somewhat identified, and which I have been afraid lest it might form a portion of my epitaph, will readily occur to you as having the most effect upon an audience ; I mean, of course, 'The Cork Leg.' As it is said most people are fond of doing that for which they are the least fitted, my own preference is for a serious song, and I have taken great pleasure in singing 'The Three Fishers' and songs of that character, and in some sections of the country where the opera has not penetrated I have the vanity to believe I shall be longest remembered for my rendering of music of that nature.

"The only remark I have to make is, that I have come nearer being frightened to death with stage-nervousness in the delineation of the characters in Gilbert and Sullivan's operas than in any others, the reason for which I am unable to explain.

"Sincerely yours,

"H. C. BARNABEE."

Charles E. L. Wingate.

IRISH IVY.

DESMOND'S lost tower, the ruined kiln, as one
It holds in equal green oblivion.
It breathes perennial grace o'er long decay,
And gives antiquity to yesterday.

John James Piatt.

WITH GAUGE & SWALLOW.*

NO. II.—AN UNLAWFUL HONOR.

TWO results of my connection with Professor Cadmus's case were very gratifying: I was given a small weekly stipend, and a place was found for my desk in the large room occupied by the other clerks. I was especially glad of this change because it removed me from unpleasantly close association with the office-boy and gave me a distinct status among the strictly professional employees of Gauge & Swallow. But more than both these things I prized the fact that I had attracted the attention of the senior partner and—as I believed—made upon him a not altogether unpleasant impression.

I was given a desk next to the railed enclosure occupied by Mr. Burrill and alongside that of Mr. Minton,—“our Mr. Minton,” as he was styled by the members of the firm. When we were at work we sat with our backs to Mr. Burrill, who, his desk facing the other way, sat also with his back to us. We had only to turn round upon our office-chairs, therefore, to be within arm's length of each other with the light low railing of Burrill's enclosure between.

Burrill had been with Mr. Gauge before the formation of the partnership with Mr. Swallow, and was still the confidential assistant of the senior partner. He had been the chief clerk, perhaps the only clerk, of the firm for years, but was now too old for active duty. Besides, he was a mere clerk, one of the ancient style of scribes, whose professional knowledge, though by no means despicable in matters of detail, was not sufficient to enable him to give that general oversight to the business of a modern legal firm which a head clerk or a junior partner is expected to exercise. He and Minton were known as “the old man's pets,” the office being divided into two sets, the one consisting of Bronson and the clerks under his direction and the other of Mr. Burrill and Mr. Minton. These two never seemed to notice the chief clerk—officially, I mean—or to recognize his function or authority so far as their own conduct was concerned. To all the other employees he used the imperative mood; to them he only made suggestions. This did not surprise me so far as Mr. Minton was concerned, and I soon learned that Burrill was equally exempt from his oversight. The old man did but little, but for that he received authority directly from the head of the firm. He could neither be subordinated nor removed.

“He'll stick right there as long as he is able to come to the office,” said the chief clerk to me one day, “whether he is able to do anything or not.”

Of this fact the old gentleman seemed perfectly well aware, and as he hobbled back and forth from the private room of his employer to his desk he neither gave information as to the work on which he was

engaged nor sought to know what others were doing. When he desired assistance or required any particular thing to be done, he notified the chief clerk, and that functionary always complied with his request, though it was never made in the name of the firm. He was a white-haired, amiable old gentleman, who had served his time with a London barrister of high repute before the chief clerk was born, and would not bate a jot of his dignity to the new system the other represented. He bore malice to no human being, I think, except the chief clerk, and towards him only in an impersonal sense as the exponent of modern methods.

As the years went by, this antipathy was transferred, in part, at least, to the still more modern mechanical appliances for abbreviating clerklly labor. He lived to see many multiplying devices tried, and always rejoiced in their failure. When the type-writer came into use and its work was recognized by the courts as a suitable substitute for written instruments, the old man began to lose faith in his ideals, and unceasingly bewailed the degeneracy of modern times. He often expressed regret that he had lived to see the type-writer usurp the place of the pen, and until his latest hour would never dictate to a stenographer nor allow his work to be manifolded by mechanical means.

In striking contrast with the old copyist was Mr. Jasper Minton, who was grouped with him by the youngsters as an element antagonistic to the chief clerk. He was a man somewhat above the middle height, plain-featured, with dull brown hair which seemed never to have need of brush or comb,—that is, it was never in disorder and never showed signs of having been put in order. It was the same with his clothing; it was always of the plainest material, and never of the glossy black so much affected by the profession, yet he never seemed aware that he was not fittingly arrayed. He was compactly built, and clean-shaven except for a neutral-tinted moustache.

There was nothing especially soldier-like about him, yet one instinctively felt that his cool gray eyes had not always looked on peaceful scenes. It was not, however, until his right side-face was turned towards you that one realized what heroic fibre was to be found in the make-up of this unpretentious man. At the point of the high cheekbone a bullet had entered, ploughed its way back under the cavity of the eye, torn away the osseous foundation of the parietal bone, and, bursting out just in front of the ear, had lightly cut the tip and gone on its unrecorded way. It was known that after receiving this terrible wound Jasper Minton had continued with his command until the fight was over, when he reported to his superior with the laconic remark that if there was nothing especial on hand he would step down to the hospital and have the scratch attended to.

This man was a salaried attorney, employed by Gauge & Swallow to do their work whatever it might be and wherever he might be sent. He was their agent, acting in their behalf, clothed with unlimited discretion, binding and releasing in their name; but he had nothing to do with fees or charges, profit or loss. He was simply "Jasper Minton, Attorney, with Gauge & Swallow." That was all,—with the great firm, but not of it. Those who knew him wondered at this; but he

seemed quite content. He was regarded as an unusually good "all round" lawyer, and attended to most of Gauge & Swallow's cases in their preliminary stages, tried many of the lesser ones, and was not unfrequently an indispensable associate in the trial of the most important.

He lived somewhere out of town, and brought his lunch in a tin pail like a day-laborer and ate it in the office, usually at his desk and frequently without interrupting his work. He was never ten minutes late, never missed an engagement or failed to have a brief or a pleading ready on time. In the office he was accounted niggardly and plodding, —niggardly because he made no secret of his desire to avoid expenditure, and plodding because he was such a tremendous worker.

Yet he was seriously unfitted for the manual drudgery of the profession. Though an expert pleader and a draughtsman of rare excellence, he was a poor penman and totally incapable of making a correct copy. His need for clerical assistance was, therefore, frequent and often pressing; but he never allowed himself to be put in the attitude of asking favor of the chief clerk.

When he first came into the office, I was told, the conflict between him and the executive functionary was very amusing.

"Mr. Bronson," he would say, "I think Mr. Swallow would like this brief copied at once. Shall I give it to Mr. Scott?"

"Mr. Scott is otherwise engaged," Bronson would reply.

Minton would fold the paper and put it in his pocket. After a time Bronson would say, in a condescending tone,—

"If you will let me have that brief, I think I can get it done for you, Mr. Minton."

"You are very kind," Minton would reply, without looking up.

The next day, perhaps, the paper would be filed in a neat perpendicular hand of wonderful clearness. So it came about that little of his copying was done at the office unless specially directed by one of the firm. After this had gone on for some time, Mr. Swallow saw fit to rally his assistant about the clothes he wore.

"Who is your tailor, Minton?" he asked, jocularly.

"Underwood cuts my clothes," Minton answered, dryly.

Underwood was Mr. Swallow's tailor, one of the most fashionable in the city, and a great friend of Minton.

"And who makes them?"

"My wife," gravely.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Swallow, seeing his mistake. "Isn't that pretty hard on her?"

"I don't know," was the cool reply. "She finds time besides to do more copying for Gauge & Swallow than any clerk in their office."

Burrill says Mr. Swallow's face was a picture worth seeing at this reply. After that Bronson never threw any obstacle in the way of Minton's work, and the pointed microscopic handwriting was rarely seen in the office.

It was reported among the clerks that nothing ever betrayed Mr. Minton into any manifestation of surprise, and that even when Mr. Swallow had been thrown off his guard by the tactics of the enemy, Mr. Minton had remained undisturbed and had saved more than one

important case by his scornful impassivity. It is certain that the firm appreciated him very highly, as was well attested by the salary they paid for his services; but it would never do for Gauge & Swallow to have a partner who brought his lunch in a dinner-pail and twice a week came to the office with a market-basket on his arm. He seemed also to have an inveterate antipathy to the attire affected by the profession. We paid more attention to such things even a decade and a half ago than we do now; and, I must confess, to see Mr. Minton, with his gray business suit and scarred imperturbable face, sitting in court among a crowd of sleek, black-coated lawyers, whose appearance displayed the most careful attention to the proprieties of their position, grated on the sensibilities of even the youngest clerk in the office. He did not seem to mind it, however, and I am bound to admit that it did not prevent him from being treated with the utmost consideration by the entire bar.

Between him and Burrill there had sprung up a very warm attachment. They dined together, now and then, at a restaurant, and the old man, who was a bachelor, not unfrequently spent the Sabbath with Minton at his home in the country. I immediately determined to place myself on a favorable footing with both these men without breaking with Bronson and his new methods. I have always avoided close friendships on principle, lest they entail also decided enmities. The old clerk met my advances with evident pleasure, and we were soon on very pleasant terms. As for Mr. Minton—well, he neither invited nor repelled, yet I soon felt a warmer admiration for him than I have known for any other man.

It was in consequence of some friendly overtures on my part that this self-contained man told me, in a half-proud, half-deprecatory manner, a story which made a deep impression on my mind, not merely from the exciting character of the adventure detailed, but from the suggestion it contained with regard to our national character.

It happens that my family is of New-England extraction, though there is a tradition that we are more or less nearly related to the Fontaines, or de Fontaines, of Virginia. While, therefore, I was known in the office as Mr. Fountain, I had carefully abstained from spelling my name in that manner, invariably signing it as "Gerald de Fontaine." This fact occasioned some unpleasant comment among the youngsters who saw me, as I took good care that they should, on familiar terms with the two men in the room most worthy of consideration. I am ashamed to confess that these allusions to my name annoyed me, and I determined to ask Mr. Minton's advice about reporting them to the firm.

"I suppose you have noticed my signature, Mr. Minton?" I said one day at lunch-time, for I had got into the habit of bringing a bit with me, not in a pail, it is true, but neatly wrapped up, so that I could slip it into my desk. I thought if Mr. Minton could afford to eat his luncheon at his desk I might do the same, especially as my landlady charged me nothing extra for it; and, though I was now in receipt of a small salary, even the sum of fifteen cents a day was a saving not to be despised.

"Not particularly," was the careless reply. "I believe it is legible, —which can hardly be said of mine."

"I referred to its orthography, not its chirography," I answered.

"Yes? What about it?"

It annoyed me that he had paid no attention to its aristocratic character, so I answered, rather stiffly,—

"You have observed the prefix?"

"Oh, the 'de': is it a fact or a fad?"

"I do not understand you, sir."

"I mean is it your real name or a fancy you have taken up?"

Then I told him of our supposed relation to the de Fontaines of Virginia.

"But you are one of the Fountains of Framingham."

"Yes, but they are supposed to have been of the same English stock."

"That is hardly worth discussing, because of its improbability," said Minton. "A man has the right to use the name he inherits, but in my opinion he should be careful how he adds to or takes from it."

"But this is merely a restoration," I urged.

"That brings up the question of probability. Fountain is a good old English name which probably antedates by some centuries the first progenitor of the 'de Fontaines.' I had to look the matter up a few years ago in tracing title to an inheritance, and found some curious facts in relation to the Virginia stock. It seems," he added, settling himself back in his chair with the air of one familiar with his subject, "that old Pierre de Fontaine was a man of varied attainments for his time. He was no doubt a swashbuckler of renown, and his well-established fame as a soldier served him in good stead when his life was forfeit to the crown, so that instead of being hanged he was transported to Virginia, where it was rightly judged that his courage would do the colony more good than his criminal tendencies could do harm."

"I suppose his crimes were mere acts of violence, characteristic of the time," I said, jealous of the fame of the ancestry I desired to claim.

"Well, I believe he had been up for robbery once or twice and so lost his clergy; but the moving cause of his enforced migration seems to have been a double conviction at the same assize for bigamy and forgery. It is well known that the Virginia family descended from him by a marriage contracted after his arrival in the colony. As he must have had at least two wives on the other side to support the indictment for bigamy, it is quite possible that the Yankee family may be descended from him likewise."

This remark nettled me, and I rejoined, with some heat,—

"It is evident, Mr. Minton, that you care nothing for titles."

"You are half right," he answered, good-naturedly,—"which is nearer than most men get. I certainly despise hereditary titles as much as I esteem well-earned honors. A father's name is an honorable inheritance; a transmitted title may be a badge of shame or even a ridiculous travesty of merit. Think of an idiotic peer of the realm brought into the House of Lords in the care of a keeper to vote with the government on a division. Bah! it is enough to sicken the believer in civilization! Inherited titles are the sickliest of all shams. If I

were a real descendant of old Pierre, I would write my name Fontaine, or possibly de Fontaine, with positive pride in the ancestor who, after a life of debauchery in the Old World, came to the New, with only his sword and the felon's brand, and carved out for himself an honorable place among the strong men of his day. So, too, if my father and his father before him had written the name Fountain, no power in the world could induce me to cast discredit upon them by changing a single letter."

"You do not believe such things are an incentive to worthy actions?"

"What things?"

"Honors that a man may win and transmit with his name."

"Sometimes, no doubt; but more frequently inherited honor, like inherited wealth, tends to debase and demoralize the possessor. A father's renown should always be an incentive to the son to win equal honor."

"But with us Americans there is no such incentive."

"That is too true; and in my opinion it is chiefly because we have but one standard of merit,—money, or, at the best, money and power. We recognize no honor except in wealth or political station."

"You will surely except the prestige attaching to military achievement?"

"That least of all," he said, with a peculiar smile. "We pay for our patriotism by the day, and recognize no merit attaching to the performance of a soldier's duty that has not its equivalent in money—or a monument. Look at our soldiers of the late war! If they were entitled to wear so much as a ribbon at the button-hole in token of faithful service, it would constitute an impulse that would carry us on for a generation. Honor is something better than rank; and if we could hold out to each generation the opportunity to win and wear distinctive marks of merit, gold would soon cease to be the only or even the highest prize of American life."

"One would hardly expect a man with such a—a—practical turn of mind as you, to be so sentimentally inclined." I came near saying "an economical turn of mind," but caught myself just in time.

"No?" he asked, with a smile, as if he read my thought. After a moment's silence he added, as a softer look came into his eyes than I had ever seen there before, "I suppose you would hardly believe that I once risked being cashiered by refusing to obey an explicit order of the Secretary of War—the great War Secretary, too, whose wrath was no light thing to face—and surrender a decoration I had fairly won?"

"No, indeed. Tell me about it, please."

While I have no especial admiration for a soldier, and certainly never had any desire to be one, I must confess that I do love to hear gallant deeds recounted, especially by those engaged in them. I entirely approve the dictum of our modern literary cult, that the days of the heroic are past. Henceforth the world will be governed by the rates of exchange, and a good coat will be worth more to the man ambitious of success than the best sword ever forged. Yet I like to hear about what I shall never see, and only half believe in at the best. So

I pressed very earnestly for an explanation of the fact he had stated. For a time he made no response. Finally he turned to his desk, and, taking a little silver case from one of its drawers, wheeled about so that the light would fall upon it, touched a spring, and gazed at what it contained with more emotion than I supposed him capable of betraying. We had just finished our luncheon, and I had lighted a cigar. Strangely enough, this man with the impress of a soldier's life visibly impressed upon him neither drank nor smoked. Watching him for a moment, I felt sure from the strange light in his face that he had forgotten the present and was living in the past.

"May I see it?" I asked, taking the cigar from my mouth and leaning towards him.

He took from the case a red silk ribbon crossed with narrow white and blue at the top, on which was printed, in gilt letters,—

LEGION OF HONOR

ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

Attached to it was a plain gold pin bearing the name "Lt. Jasper Minton," and the date "Feb. 5th, 1863." Burrill came in while I was looking at it, and inquired what we were about. In response to a nod from Minton, I handed the badge to the old clerk.

"And was this you, my boy?" asked the old man, proudly, when he had deciphered the inscription.

Minton answered only by a smile.

"Was that the time you got your wound?" I asked, glancing at his cheek.

"Not that one," he answered, with a quiet laugh, as if he carried an assortment of such interesting relics, each having its own independent history.

"Oh, do tell us about it, my boy," exclaimed the old man, drawing up his chair and preparing to listen.

"It is not much of a story," said Minton, apologetically. "I was a young man when the war broke out, having graduated from Dartmouth two years before and gone to Minnesota with my lawyer's license and a theodolite, ready to take to railroading or the profession as chance might determine. My inclination was entirely to the latter, however. I was neither ambitious nor adventurous. Besides, I was in love. A snug practice in a country town, with a little home and—Melissa,—that was the height of my aspiration."

"As if that was not enough, you dog!" growled the old man in response to the light in Minton's eyes as he pronounced the name.

"Well, the war came, and there was an end of all such dreams. I did not hesitate,—could not. It seemed as much a matter of course as that I lived. As I had no desire to excel as a soldier and no relish for political prominence, I was quite content with the place of an enlisted man, anxious only to do my duty and have the need for it soon over. I obtained preferment very soon, simply because I did what was required faithfully and without complaint. I certainly did not seek it.

I always felt sure that I would make a fair sort of a lawyer, but had no confidence in my fitness for military life.

"After a time, accident brought me into personal contact with the general in command of the corps to which I belonged, and a few days later I was surprised to find myself detailed as judge-advocate of a general court-martial. From this time on I was frequently designated for such service. It was a rather congenial occupation, and I welcomed it even more gladly than an actual preferment, because it gave experience in the line of my profession.

"In the mean time the general in command of the Department, in order to encourage the soldiers to acts of individual daring, had instituted, by general orders, what he termed a Legion of Honor, and one or two badges had already been bestowed. The effect on the spirit of the army was perceptible at once. One could see that the hope of wearing this bit of ribbon was a far greater incentive to gallant deeds than the prospect of promotion. It conferred no rank or privilege, but in the eyes of the soldiery an enlisted man with this badge on his breast was a far more enviable mortal than he who wore an eagle on his shoulders. This feeling I could well understand.

"I was a veteran of almost two years' experience, and had already crossed my straps with a bar, when I was ordered to report for duty as judge-advocate of a general court-martial to be held at the head-quarters of a division which was encamped some thirty miles distant from the one to which I belonged. It was an important occasion, as some officers of high rank were to be tried on very serious charges, and I was almost the only subaltern named in the detail composing the court. I was naturally very much gratified at this evidence of confidence on the part of the general commanding, and on reporting for duty I was given an escort of eighteen cavalry under charge of a sergeant, making, with my clerk, servant, and myself, a party of twenty-two. Our destination was the head-quarters of a division occupying an isolated position on our extreme left, within supporting distance, it is true, of other corps, but with long intervals between, through which the enemy's cavalry, which greatly outnumbered our own, and had, besides, the advantage of a thorough knowledge of the roads and the sympathy of the inhabitants, ranged pretty much at will, attacking our trains and 'gobbling up' small bodies of troops almost within sight of our outposts.

"For this reason, I hesitated to make the journey with the small force at my command. My orders, however, were imperative, and this was all the escort that had been assigned me. A year later, I would not have minded taking much greater chances. I belonged to the infantry, and did not know how safe a squad of cavalry really is in such a country as that we had to traverse. In fact, it was a lesson even our generals had yet to learn.

"None of the men knew anything of the road over which we were to pass, save its general direction. I studied it as carefully as our imperfect maps would permit, and at the last outpost, twelve miles away, obtained a 'way-bill,' as it was called, drawn by a scout who claimed to be familiar with the road, giving its salient topographical features. With this aid we proceeded without difficulty until mid-

afternoon, when, either from having failed to observe instructions or from treachery on the part of the scout, we found ourselves upon a road leading in a direction very different from the one we ought to pursue, though still exhibiting all the local characteristics he had described. As soon as I was assured of this, I called a halt where four roads met, and, sending out vedettes on each, applied myself to the study of the map while the horses were being rested and watered.

"After some difficulty, I located the Corners at which we had halted as about eight miles east of the road we should have taken and some ten miles south of the town where the division we sought was encamped. From this point a country road was marked upon the map as running directly northward to the point we wished to reach. It led through a somewhat rugged country; but, as it was a post-road, without troublesome intersections, I felt little doubt of our ability to follow it. These conclusions were confirmed by the answers I received to questions, framed on the assumption of knowledge and intended to convey the idea that we meant to follow the road by which we had come, which I propounded to the female inhabitants of a poor white's cabin which stood near at hand.

"The volunteer soldier of that period of the war placed little reliance on the knowledge or judgment of his subaltern. In this case I could not blame my escort for any lack of faith in me. We had never met until the night before, and I did not even belong to their arm of the service. My lieutenant's straps went for nothing. They knew, no doubt, hundreds of subalterns who were in no respect the superior of the enlisted men they commanded, except in rank. The doubt I felt in regard to our course it had been impossible for me to conceal, and when I returned I found the men grouped together, earnestly consulting in regard to the situation. They looked at me inquiringly as I came up. I knew it was essential that I should have their confidence. So, without waiting for the question that I saw trembled on the sergeant's lips, I said,—

"Men, that scoundrel who marked out the route for us at Bairdstown is a traitor and has sent us on the wrong road. If we should keep on, I have a notion we would strike John Morgan's lines about dark, instead of Rousseau's. I have suspected this for some time, but, as he was reported to be reliable, did not feel justified in departing from his instructions until we reached this point, which I recognized at once as the intersection of two roads plainly laid down on the map. I would like to send back word to the officer in command; but I could not ask one of you to take the risk of riding back alone, and more than one could not be spared. The left-hand road runs across the country straight to our destination. We have lost about four or five miles, but have plenty of time and our animals are in good condition. You may as well tighten your girths and look to your arms, because if we have to fight we are going to give a good account of ourselves."

"I drew a revolver, apparently for the purpose of examining its condition,—really, to have it in hand if there should be any indication of dissent.

"'Lieutenant,' said the sergeant, argumentatively, 'hadn't we better——'

"'It is settled, sir,' I interrupted, quietly, looking up from my examination of the weapon with the hammer at full cock. 'Mount your men.'

"'All right!' said he, glancing at the weapon with a shrug. 'You are the doctor.'

"The reply was not exactly such as the Regulations prescribe, but he saluted as he spoke, and I saw at once that neither frankness nor decision had been lost upon the little squad. I had been deceived, had admitted it, and had decided promptly on a way to get out of the trap. This gave them confidence, which was greatly increased when, after the vedettes were called in, we started back along the road we had come, the people in the cabin watching us curiously as we rode away. A half-mile back I had observed a flinty ridge which crossed the pike at an angle, which I was satisfied would intersect the road we wished to take about the same distance from the place of our halt, running all the way through open oak woods. Reaching this point, I halted the men and made them ride carefully, one by one, over the narrow crest into the woods beyond. This done, I dismounted and myself obliterated the few traces of the movement the flinty rocks retained. This simple expedient strengthened my hold upon the men, and I felt they would follow wherever I might lead, as the event proved. Whatever might be in our front, they felt safe from pursuit. As one of them remarked, we 'had gone into a hole and pulled the hole in after us.'

"I pushed on briskly, making the men dismount when the ascent was sharp, so as to save the horses, not knowing what need we might have for wind and bottom before sunset. I was determined to cover at least ten miles before dark, which ought to bring us to our destination if my calculations were correct. If not, I resolved to seek some sheltered position, feed the horses, and rest until the moon rose, and then take the first road leading westward, which I felt sure would eventually lead into the Lebanon pike.

"About five o'clock we crossed the summit of the ridge we had been climbing, catching a glimpse of a little town in the valley below, and just beyond it the white tents of a considerable body of soldiers. There was about the camp that indescribable air of neatness that characterized the posts of the Federal army, and through my glass I could easily make out the dark uniforms of the men and the flag that marked the quarters of the general commanding. This relieved my anxiety.

"'That's where we're bound for, boys,' I said, gleefully, turning to my little squad, 'and, if John Morgan is not waiting for us somewhere among the hills below, we shall soon be there.'

"The celebrated Confederate partisan was at that time so nearly ubiquitous on front and rear that one would hardly have been surprised to find him within hail of any of our outposts. Dashing, tireless, and of inexhaustible resource, in command of a force some one of whom was sure to know every bridle-path in the whole region where he fought, Morgan undoubtedly caused us more damage with less loss of men than any other Confederate leader. He rarely fought, not because he was

unwilling to fight, but because, as he said, his men were too valuable to be killed. So my words were not regarded as a warning, but as a jest.

"Up to that time we had proceeded cautiously and almost silently since leaving the main highway. The road had been rugged and broken, and the march a difficult one. Hardly had the descent begun when we struck into a broad, well-travelled road, one end of which led over the ridge to the westward, while the other crept down into the valley below. It was densely wooded on the upper side, but the track was wide and the grade easy as it wound out and in along the undulations of the hill-side. On the right or lower side were occasional clearings, and now and then a house perched on a knoll across a little ravine, the course of which determined that of the roadway.

"As soon as we struck this our vigilance relaxed. It was a warm day, and the horses, though not at all winded, were perspiring freely. We threw the reins upon their necks and let them take their own gait down the easy grade. I remember thinking that for a spurt of a mile or so they were actually in better condition than when we started out. The men were laughing and chatting gayly as we rode on. A sort of uneasy feeling led me to caution them to keep their saddles and not entirely relax their watchfulness until we reached the valley. They complied with my request, for I made it a request rather than a command, though I could see that they regarded it as an unnecessary precaution. However, the soldier always esteems watchfulness on the part of his officer, knowing how much depends on being ready for the worst.

"In reality, I had no apprehension. Practically in sight of the camp, I felt that we were almost as safe as if within its lines. Gradually I drew ahead a little with the sergeant, both our horses being fast walkers, and we fell into conversation about the curious retreat, which was practically a stampede, that had occurred along these very roads the summer before, occasioned by Bragg's sudden irruption on our left flank. In the race for the Ohio we had beaten him by a neck, though he had the inside line. The impolicy of this retreat was now apparent. Our army should either have pressed forward or else have allowed Bragg to pass us and fallen upon his rear.

"While we discussed this subject, the trend of the road had changed. The open valley stretching away to the eastward lay upon our right, and the sun shone over the hills at our left, leaving us in the cool evening shadow. The road upon which we were, evidently, fell into one that led down the valley towards the town which lay at its junction with the Lebanon pike. Thinking of this, I called the sergeant's attention to the open gateway it afforded to the rear of our forces in the town, now hardly two miles away. Our road was still cut out of the hill-side, which rose abruptly on our left, while below us, at the foot of a sharp declivity, stretched away an open meadow.

"Almost as I spoke we rounded a projecting point of the hill-side, and saw a force of Confederate cavalry filing cautiously from the valley road into the one on which we were advancing. I judged that there were three hundred or more, and that about half of them had passed the angle and were in the road in our front. There was but one thing

to do. To turn back up the hill with our jaded horses in the attempt to escape, was to invite capture or destruction. We could not leave the road on either side for at least three miles. They were below us, hardly one hundred rods away, the slope was sharp, a charge was sure to throw them into confusion, and some of us stood a fair chance of getting through. As for the rest—well, it was the only chance!

"All this, and more, rushed through my mind in a second.

"*'Sabres!'* I hissed to the sergeant as I lowered my bridle arm, gripping the reins tighter as I did so, and flashed my own weapon to my shoulder.

"The movement was answered instantly by the rattle of blades and the clang of empty scabbards behind. There was nothing but cold steel for it; and even that did not promise much. Every one saw this and knew that the odds against us were terrible. No matter: we were in for it, and not a man flinched.

"*'Left—wheel!'* shouted the sergeant as he drew up by my side, pressing me to the outer edge of the roadway, and in half the time it takes to tell it we were ten files front advancing at a sharp trot. I threw a glance down the even line the sergeant was dressing as if on parade, and I never felt prouder in my life than of that handful of determined fellows under my command. My clerk had fallen into position in my rear. Being a *'dough-boy,'* he had no sabre, but he carried his revolver at the cock, his arm straight down at his side as if he had been in the cavalry all his life. My servant, a big black fellow, mounted on a powerful bay, was just in the rear of the centre, his eyes almost starting from their sockets, his hand grasping an old sabre he had long been accustomed to carry when on the march. I knew he was terribly frightened, but I was sure he would fight desperately.

"During this time I had been giving my orders in a tone which must have been audible pretty nearly to the town, and in a style that would have astounded my command at any other time, my infantry training overpowering instinctively the little knowledge I had of cavalry tactics.

"*'Forward! Guide right! Double quick!'* I shouted, waving my sword above my head.

"*'Front rank—right cut! Rear rank—tierce point!'* supplemented the sergeant.

"The swords leaped up and hung like a bow of light over each set face in the little company.

"*'Charge!'* I think every lip echoed the terrible word!

"I heard the horses groan as the rowels pressed their flanks. Then we leaned forward with teeth clinched and the muscles of our upflung arms so tensely drawn that the sabres hardly quivered as we shot down the sharp declivity. Silent and swift the road flew back beneath our horses' feet. The enemy were scarce two hundred yards away. The road fell towards them straight as an arrow. An insurmountable bank was on their right; upon their left, a wall six or eight feet sheer, and then a sharp descent to the little rill we had been following down the mountain, which crossed the valley road hardly a rod above the junction with the one we were descending. The bridge was a high one, though

not more than ten or twelve feet long, the little branch being evidently a torrent in wet weather. I saw these things at a glance, and felt that they all made in our favor. Already there were signs of confusion among the enemy. They no doubt greatly outnumbered our force,—though twenty sabres in the hands of desperate men, under the circumstances, were not to be regarded with composure.

"Plunging the spurs into my horse, I would have shot ahead even of the blue wall at my left, had not the sergeant struck his sabre across my breast, exclaiming,—

"Do not press the pace!"

"I remember the act seemed ludicrous. The idea of pressing the pace when every horse was doing his uttermost! I had hardly time to think of it before we were upon them.

"They had had no chance to form to meet us; indeed, no formation could have resisted the impetus of our charge down that sharp declivity. A few shots were fired into us before we struck the head of the column. Not many of them were armed with sabres. A group of officers in front drew, some revolvers and some sabres, and stood their ground. Before we reached them the whole column was in confusion,—those in front striving to pass those behind, some leaping the wall at the side, their horses falling headlong as they struck, and others crowding back so that the whole weight pressed against the column yet on the valley road. I saw one man pushed off the bridge before we had come close enough to strike a blow.

"Upon this confused and struggling mass we fell like an avalanche. I was afraid for an instant that our course would be stayed by its mere *inertia*. Had the entire force been in our front, this must have been the result. As it was, the rear of the column was helpless, and those in front at once became our unwilling coadjutors. We dashed among them, cutting, shouting, spurring, cursing! It seemed as if every man in the little company was transformed into a demon!

"The rear of the Confederate column was utterly powerless to help those in front. They could not fire upon us, because we were inextricably intermixed with their comrades. Indeed, I am satisfied that a good part of the casualties the enemy suffered were due to the indiscreet firing of that part of the column yet upon the valley road. This was soon ended, however, by the pressure of the frightened horses in front. It is curious how quickly the war-horse scents defeat and how frantic he then becomes to escape from danger. Before we had covered half the distance from where the head of their column halted to the intersecting roadway, those still in our front were struggling only to escape from our onset.

"It was all over in a minute. The Confederates were fleeing along the road they had come; a few dead and wounded were lying upon the hill-side; some riderless horses were running wildly about; and we were galloping towards the town, where the long roll was beating and our pickets were creeping cautiously around the base of the hill that intervened."

"Were none of your men hurt?" I inquired, with breathless interest.

"Every one except my servant Jack. He was in the rear when the fight began, but was the first to reach the main road, I think, and led us by a wide stretch in our race towards the town. One man was killed, two badly wounded, and all the rest more or less hurt. The sergeant lost his horse, and came out mounted behind me, with a bullet through his left hand. It was lucky for me that I gave him a lift, too: I should hardly have been telling the story now, if I had not."

"And you?"

"Well, I've parted my hair in the middle ever since," he answered, with a blush, lifting the short brown mass that lay upon his temple as he spoke.

Unnoticed by Mr. Minton, the clerks had returned from luncheon one by one, and had gathered about his desk, towards which his back was turned, listening to the narrative. Even Mr. Swallow had been an interested listener to the greater part of it, and gave the signal for the hearty round of applause which greeted the conclusion, in which all joined except Bronson, who said, surlily,—

"I don't see what that has to do with the bit of ribbon you were gushing over when I came in."

"True enough," said Mr. Swallow, warmly. "I suspect you have left out the best part of your story."

"Oh, there is nothing more worth telling. Of course we were mentioned in orders. The sergeant got his promotion, as he deserved, before his bridle-hand was healed. A couple of weeks afterwards, our division was reviewed by the general commanding. He was a dashing man, whom we all loved. When he came to the right of our brigade he halted and spoke a word to the officer commanding. Then he came on down the line: muskets rattled to a present, and swords flashed in salute. When he came opposite the colors of our regiment, he halted, and gave the command,—

"'Recover—arms!'

"I started as if struck by a bullet when an instant afterwards I heard him say,—

"'Lieutenant Jasper Minton—to the front and centre—March!'

"I have no idea how I got there. I thought 'ten thousand thousand horrid eyes were looking down in blame.' What was to follow this sudden summons? I could not guess. Presently I found myself standing close beside the general's horse, my sword still at the shoulder, while I awkwardly saluted with my left hand.

"'Lieutenant Jasper Minton?' he inquired.

"'Here,' I answered. I could think of nothing else to say.

"He leaned quickly forward, pinned this ribbon on the breast of my coat, and, taking off his hat with a quick motion peculiar to him, said,—

"'For gallant conduct in attacking a greatly superior force of the enemy.'

"His staff had uncovered too. I heard the roll of drums behind me, and the command ran down the line,—

"'Present—arms!'

"I stood still, dazed, confounded by what had happened.

"Lieutenant Minton, to your post—March!"

"I saluted and turned away. The general and his brilliant staff rattled by me as I marched down the line to my station. It was only a bit of ribbon, but I prize it more to-day than any token of rank I ever won. A month afterwards I was forbidden to wear the bauble, under penalty of dismissal from the service."

"So you sent it to your sweetheart?"

"No; I kept on wearing it."

"And were you dismissed?"

"In consideration of good conduct I was allowed to resign, 'for the good of the service!'"

"But why wouldn't they let you wear it, boy?" asked Burrill, who had been mopping the tears from his face for twenty minutes while listening to Minton's story.

"It was held to be in conflict with the Constitution of the United States, Article I., Section 9, Subdivision 8," answered Minton, with his usual half-contemptuous tone, as he returned the decoration to its case.

"'No title of nobility shall be granted,' etc., etc.," mumbled Burrill, glancing deferentially at Mr. Swallow. Though but a naturalized citizen, Burrill was probably the only man in the office who could have given the key-words of the section.

"Fudge!" was the junior partner's comment upon the law cited by the old clerk.

"How did you get that other beauty-spot?" asked the chief clerk, with a sneer.

"Well, Mr. Bronson," said Minton, significantly, "some were as anxious to get into the army as others were to get out of it. Though I left 'for the good of the service,' nobody thought it was to avoid danger. The governor of Vermont happened to hear of my queer plight in being compelled to resign because I had been commended for good conduct, and offered me a place in the new brigade they were raising, in my native State: so I went in again."

Bronson turned away and strode across the room to his desk. The other clerks sauntered off to resume their labors. After a moment's conversation about some papers he held in his hand, Mr. Swallow said,—

"I should like to see you in Mr. Gauge's room for a moment, Mr. Minton."

Minton closed his desk methodically and followed him to the Senior's room.

"Prepare to salute the new partner," said Bronson, with a malicious grin, as the door closed behind them. "Can you whistle 'Hail to the Chief,' Mr. Fountain? or shall I get the office-boy to do it when he comes out?"

I made no answer to the taunt, which I considered an insult, as I never whistle. Work dragged, because all eyes kept wandering to the door of Mr. Gauge's room. It was more than an hour before it opened and Jasper Minton came out alone. There was nothing to be read in his countenance as he walked back to his desk. Bronson watched him

until he addressed himself to his work, then slipped off his stool and went to Mr. Swallow's room.

"Did they offer you a partnership, my boy?" asked old Burrill, leaning across the railing and speaking in an anxious whisper.

"Yes," answered Minton, cheerfully.

"Good! good! Give me your hand!" said the old man, heartily. "When is it to begin?"

"Not at all, Burrill," answered the younger man, almost tenderly. "I declined."

"Declined! Declined a partnership with Gauge & Swallow?"

"I had to do it, Burrill," said the other, firmly.

"Well, well, well!"

The old man groped his way back to his desk and sat down as if he had received an unexpected blow. A thrill of astonishment almost akin to horror ran round the circle of listening clerks.

Albion W. Tourgee.

THE PRICE.

YOU would be a great artist? can you make
A lyre of your own aching heart-strings, and,
Striking it with a careful, critic hand,
Out of the chords a deathless music wake?

Or can you take the keen-edged blade of Pain,
And from your quivering soul, with its dire aid,
Studying meanwhile each stroke as it is made,
Chisel a statue for Art's sacred fane?

Or can you in your heart's blood bravely dip
Your brush, and paint a picture that will bring—
The while it sets the dull world wondering—
The approving smile to Art's impartial lip?

Can you pour sweet from bitter? can you, whirled
By tempest, guide a storm-tossed bark to calm?
Can you go starving for love's blessed alm,
Yet of your very famine feed a world?

You cannot? 'Tis too great a price to pay?
You are too weak? Ay, 'tis a fearful price.
If you one moment count it sacrifice,
You are not called to greatness; go your way

And live like other women, and rejoice
In your own path; it may be better so.
I do not say, but this full well I know,
God gives unto his chosen ones no choice.

Carlotta Perry.

REMINISCENCES.

WHEN, more than sixty-two years ago, about a year after my ordination as pastor of a little flock in Philadelphia, I one Sunday saw John Quincy Adams, then on his way home to Quincy, Massachusetts, after his inauguration as President of these United States, enter the little building which we called our church (but which was popularly regarded as a conventicle, that some people, out of horror at our heresies, avoided not only entering but even passing, or even looking at, if they had to pass it), would any one believe me were I to pretend that having the President among my hearers stirred in me no feeling inconsistent with the hour and the place?

Always afterwards Mr. Adams attended the Unitarian Church when he was in Philadelphia on a Sunday, with one exception, when he went to the First Presbyterian Church, of which the Rev. Albert Barnes was pastor. On that occasion, when asked after church what was the subject of discourse, his answer was, so I was told, "The usual one,—the Atonement." What a change has come over the general tone of the pulpit since then! Nowadays there is oftentimes hardly any difference to see between orthodox and liberal preachers. (I use these terms only by way of designation.) The denunciatory tone that used to thunder from Evangelical pulpits has quite disappeared.

To return to Mr. Adams. I became his ardent partisan. I was bound to be so, not only by my father's great respect for him, but because I held him to be an honorary member of my little congregation. I forgave him for not awarding me, some few years before, a prize for declamation, for which I competed at Harvard, and which, with the modesty I have always credited myself with, I fancied I had deserved. Mr. Adams was one of the appointed umpires.

But all this only by way of a beginning. Not another word about myself. So much, I hope, will be pardoned to my five-and-eighty years.

Mr. Adams himself was never a partisan. By nature and by principle he was incapable of anything like political intrigue. Siding with one party one day and with the opposite party the next, he was charged with seeking to conciliate his enemies. On one occasion, at a dinner-party, the toast was, "John Quincy Adams, may he live to confound his foes." "As he has done his friends," Daniel Webster, who was present, was reported to have added, *sotto voce*.

Originally Mr. Adams ranked with the old Federalists, who never forgave him for taking office under President Jefferson. He was, in fact, on that side which never wholly sided with either of the great parties, and on which, as Edward Everett said, the kicks were out of all proportion to the coppers.

Mr. Adams was the defender of General Jackson in the matter of the Seminole War, which the general was considered to have carried on with too high a hand. Mr. Adams's defence was pronounced by the

general himself, in a note to a friend to whom he sent a copy, "a complete justification of justice and moral rule." There can be no doubt that the note was the general's own composition. But it is doubtful whether his warmest friends ever imagined that his very able state papers were his own work. They were believed to be written for him. He might have made his bow, as Pope did to Warburton, for finding more meaning in them than he himself was aware of.

After his great military successes, and before he was thought of for the Presidency, General Jackson visited Philadelphia. It was told of him that at a dinner-party in his honor some one said to him, "General, they will want you for President by and by." "A h—ll of a President I should make!" he was reported to have answered,—a prediction which his enemies held was amply fulfilled. They accorded to him, moreover, the credit of not being blinded, by the intoxicating cup of his great popularity, at the time he uttered the prophecy, to his own Presidential disqualifications.

It was a memorable breakfast at which, with my friend the late Rev. Wm. Ware, then pastor of the First Unitarian Church in New York, I was honored in being a guest. The breakfast was given by the venerable John Vaughan in the rooms of the American Philosophical Society in Fifth Street below Chestnut, rooms in which Mr. Vaughan, being the Librarian of the Society, had his home. Mr. Adams, then Ex-President of the United States and member of the House of Representatives,—it was in President Jackson's time,—Dr. Channing, Mr. Duponceau, Colonel Drayton of South Carolina, and one or two others, made up the party. We sat down at the table about 9 A.M. and rose from it about 1 P.M. Albert Gallatin came in before we broke up. My friend Wm. Ware and I, being the youngest present, scarcely opened our mouths save to put something into them, and not much for that, having a more refreshing repast, bountifully as the board was laden with the food that perisheth, the conversation being chiefly between Mr. Adams and Dr. Channing. It turned at one time upon the Presidential power of nomination, Mr. Calhoun having sought to restrict it shortly before by a resolution introduced in the Senate, concerning which Dr. Channing expressed an unfavorable opinion. Mr. Adams differed from Dr. Channing, and discoursed at large. The President, he thought, must be glad to be relieved of that function of his office, as, in discharging it, he was pretty sure to make a host of enemies for one friend, since he could nominate only one man for any given office, disappointing a troop of candidates.

After Colonel Drayton left the table, Mr. Adams spoke of the high character and ability of the gentlemen sent to Congress by South Carolina. They had been his determined opponents. A pleased expression sparkled in his watery eyes as, slowly rubbing his knee, he said that there was not one of them that had not come to him and made the *amende honorable*,—a fact alike creditable to them and to him. How true it was I happened to know, having been told once by Mr. Silsbee, then the Massachusetts Senator, that once at an evening party in Washington Mr. Adams's son and secretary told him that he had just seen a remarkable sight. As he came out of his father's door Mr. Calhoun went

up the steps and rung the bell. Mr. Calhoun, young Adams said, had not spoken to his father for four years. The next day in the Senate-chamber Mr. Calhoun told Mr. Silsbee of the great pleasure he had had in a visit to Mr. Adams.

Mr. Silsbee further told me that one evening, when he was at Mr. Adams's, when Mr. Adams was President, with Mr. Clay and one or two others, Mr. Adams took up from the table a message he was to send to the Senate the next day, nominating Directors of the United States Bank in New York. The President read their names. At one name Mr. Clay interrupted him with, "Sir, don't you know that that man is a violent political opponent of yours?" To which the President replied, "I am sorry, but he has the reputation of being an able financier. I cannot appoint men for myself, but for the country." "Well," returned Mr. Clay, "you have more of the milk of human kindness than I; but I'd be d—d if I would appoint him!"

Mr. Adams, as is well known, was elected to the Presidency by the House of Representatives, as the Constitution prescribes when there fails to be an election by the Electoral College. The case, thus provided for, had then occurred. The popular majority was then largely in favor of General Jackson. In acknowledging the formal notification of his election Mr. Adams said that, under the circumstances, he would decline the office, but "his respect for the forms of the Constitution forbade." He spoke, I doubt not, the simple truth, though his enemies refused to appreciate his motive. It is the law-abiding spirit that distinguishes this people, and of which Mr. Adams then gave an example, that has been in all our trials the salvation of the Republic. It has amounted almost to a superstition, disposing the people to submit to so inhuman an enactment as the Fugitive Slave Law: that iniquity framed into a law. There was great opposition to permitting colored persons to ride in the street-cars. Colored women during the war were turned out of the street-cars when they were on the way to visit their husbands and brothers in camp, drilling for the defence of the country. But as soon as our Legislature passed a law requiring railroads to recognize no distinction of color, instantly all the trouble ceased.

When Mr. Adams passed from the Presidential chair to a seat in the House of Representatives, he was generally considered as taking a step downward; but it was soon shown to be a step upward, to a more commanding position before the country. No President, save the first and the sixteenth, has risen above him. There he fought the battle for Freedom and the Right of Petition. Had he retired from the Presidency to private life we should never have known the grand stuff of which he was made. He would have left hardly any other memory than that of a martinet, his whole previous life, from early manhood, having been spent in office. But, as a member of Congress, the valor, the eloquence of the old man, in a word, the fiery heart of him, which he mourned over, flashed its light over the whole country. As has been said of Junius, it might be said of Mr. Adams. They who attacked him in debate or sought to defend themselves against him were in the condition of a man attempting to resist the lightning with a sword of steel and only bringing down the thunderbolt with concen-

trated force. It was proposed to expel him from the House, and he crushed the attempt under his scorn and ridicule. One of the stories told of him was that on one occasion, when he was thus dealing with his opponents, one of them, uneasy under the lash, left his seat and went to the desk of a fellow-member and asked him what he thought of it all. "What do I think of it?" was the reply. "I think you puppies have driven the old man into deep water; and if you don't look out he will drown every mother's son of you."

If men were ready to use the experience of others, it would be most desirable that every generation should be well acquainted with the history of the generation preceding it. But the history of an age can never be truthfully written until after a hundred years or more. Were it otherwise, could the history of the thirty years' war of opinion that preceded the bloody crisis in which it resulted be made familiar to the present voting generation of young men, one cannot help thinking the present political condition of the country would not be just what it is now. Then, in those anti-slavery times, it was seen, by the demoralization of our ablest Northern politicians, that the advocacy of the domestic institution of the South was as much more injurious to the whites than to the blacks as it is to commit or defend wrong than to suffer it. But I don't know how it may have fared better and at less cost with the holy cause of freedom than it has done. We are surrounded now by a great cloud of witnesses, with our martyred President at their head, to cheer this great nation on in the race that is set before it. The country is in wiser hands than ours. He who makes the wrath of man to praise Him subjugates all the evil passions to His service. Providence, as was once said by Lydia Maria Child, whose voice was one of the earliest and most powerful raised in behalf of equal justice, often uses instruments which she would not touch with a ten-foot pole.

W. H. Furness.

LUCIFER.

WHEN I went out of Paradise,
I turned a backward glance to see
Two flaming swords: once, twice, and thrice,
I turned and turned, ere I could flee.

Then down the darkened path I sped,
And heard heaven's gate behind me close:
What matter then if, quick or dead,
The world of men before me rose?

What matter now indeed, to-day,
These lower honors, lower gains?
Above me shines that higher way—
I might have walked the heavenly plains!

Nora Perry.

THE GRAND DUKE'S RUBIES.

THERE is in New York a club called the Balmoral, which has two peculiarities,—no one ever goes there much before midnight, and it is the only place in town where you can get anything fit to eat at four o'clock in the morning. The members are politicians of the higher grade, men about town, and a sprinkle of nondescripts. In the unhallowed inspiration of a moment, Alphabet Jones, the novelist,—in polite society Mr. A. B. Fenwick Chisolm-Jones,—baptized it the Smallpox, a name which has stuck tenaciously, the before-mentioned members being usually pitted—against each other. Of the many rooms of the club, one, it should be explained, is the most enticing. It is situated on an upper floor, and the siren that presides therein is a long table dressed in green. Her name is Baccarat.

One night last March, Alphabet Jones rattled up to the door in a vagabond hansom. He was thirsty, impecunious, and a trifle tired. He had been to a cotillon, where he had partaken of champagne, and he wanted to get the taste of it out of his throat. He needed five hundred dollars, and in his card-case there was only two hundred and fifty. The bar of the Athenæum Club he knew at that hour was closed, possible money-lenders were in bed, and it was with the idea of killing the two birds of the legend that he sought the Balmoral.

He encountered there no difficulty in slaking his thirst; and when, in one draught, which brought to his tonsils a suggestion of art, science, and Wagner combined, he swallowed a brandy-and-soda, he felt better, and looked about to see who might be present. The room which he had entered was on what is called the parlor-floor. It was long, high-ceiled, comfortably furnished, and somewhat dim. At the furthest end three men were seated, two of whom he recognized, the one as Sumpter Leigh, the other as Colonel Barker, but the third he did not remember to have seen before. Some Westerner, he thought; for Jones prided himself on knowing every one worth knowing in New York, and, it may be added, in several other cities as well.

He took out his card-case and thumbed the roll of bills reflectively. If he went up-stairs, he told himself, he might double the amount in two minutes. But then, again, he might lose it. Yet, if he did, might not five hundred be as easily borrowed as two hundred and fifty?

"It's brutal," he mused, "to be so hard up. Literature doesn't pay. I might better set up as publisher, open a drug-shop, turn grocer, do anything, in fact, which is brainless and remunerative, than attempt to earn a living by the sweat of my pen. There's that *Interstate Magazine*: the editor sent me a note by a messenger this morning, asking for a story, adding that the messenger would wait *while I wrote it*. Evidently he thinks me three parts stenographer and the rest kaleidoscope. What is a good synonyme for an editor, anyway?"

And as Jones asked himself this question he glared fiercely in a mirror that extended from cornice to floor. He was a handsome man, tall, fair, clear of skin, and broad of shoulder,—the sort of man that is apt to keep mothers awake and bring their daughters dreams. Then, mollified, possibly, by his own appearance, he threw himself on a sofa, and fell to thinking about the incidents of the ball.

For some time past he had been as discreetly attentive as circumstances permitted to a young girl, the only child of a potent financier, and on that particular evening he had sat out the cotillon with her at an assembly. She was very pretty, and, unusual as it may seem in a *débutante*, rather coy. But when, a half-hour before, he had wished her sweet dreams in that seductive manner for which he was famous, she had allowed the tips of her fingers to rest in his own just one fleeting second longer than was necessary, and, what is more to the point, had looked in his eyes something which now, under the influence of the brandy-and-soda, seemed almost a promise. "Dear little soul!" he muttered, "if she marries me I will refuse her nothing. It will be the devil's own job, though, to get her any sort of an engagement ring. Tiffany, perhaps, might give me one on credit, but it will have to be something very handsome, something new; not that tiresome solitaire. Those stones I saw the other day— H'm! I wonder what that fellow is staring at me for?"

He lounged forward to where the men were seated, and, being asked to draw a chair, graciously accepted the invitation and another brandy-and-soda as well.

"It was this way," the stranger exclaimed, excitedly, when he and Jones had been introduced. "I was telling these gentlemen when you came in that you looked like the Grand Duke Sergius——"

"Thank you," the novelist answered, affably. "The same to you."

"I never saw him, though," the stranger continued.

"No more have I."

"Only his picture."

"Your remark, then, was doubly flattering."

"But the picture to which I allude was that of a chimerical grand duke."

"Really, sir, really you are overwhelming."

"But wait a minute, do wait a minute. Mr. Jones, I don't know whether you caught my name: it is Fairbanks,—David Fairbanks."

"Delighted. I remember it perfectly. My old friend Nicholas Manhattan bought a ruby of you once, and a beauty it was. I heard at the time that you made a specialty of them."

"So did the grand duke. He came here, you know, on that man-of-war."

"Yes, I know. Mrs. Wainwaring gave him a reception. It was just my luck: I was down with the measles at the time."

"Oh, you were, were you? You were down with the measles, eh? Well, I wish I had been. Gentlemen, listen to this; you must listen. I was in my office in Maiden Lane one day, when a young man came in. He wore the most magnificent fur coat I have ever seen in

my life. No, that coat was something that only Russia could have produced. He handed me a card on which was engraved

POE MICHEL ZAROGUINE,

Aide-de-camp de S. A. I. le grand-duc Serge de Russie.

And then, of all things in the world, he offered me a pinch of snuff, and when I refused he helped himself out of a beautiful box and flicked the grains which had fallen on his lapel with a nimbleness of finger such as it was a pleasure to behold. I ought to tell you that he spoke English with great precision, though his accent was not pleasant,—sort of grizzled, as it were. Well, gentlemen, he said that *his* prince, as he called him, the grand duke, wanted some rubies; they were intended for a present; and, though my visitor did not imply anything either by word or gesture, I suspected at once that they were for a lady. The grand duke at that time had been here a fortnight, and it was said—However, there is no use in going into that. So I showed him a few; but, if you will believe me, he wanted enough to make a tiara. I told him that a tiara of stones of that quality would come anywhere from sixty to eighty thousand dollars. If I had said a peck of groats he could not have appeared more indifferent. ‘It is a great deal of money,’ I said. He smiled a little at that, as though he were thinking, ‘Poor devil of an American, it may seem a great deal of money to you, but to a grand duke—’ Then I brought out all I had. He looked them over with the pincers very carefully, and asked how much I valued them at. I told him a hundred and ten thousand dollars. He didn’t turn a hair.”

“Was he bald?” Jones asked.

“No, sir, he was not; and your jest is ill-timed. Gentlemen, I appeal to you. I insist on Mr. Jones’s attention——”

“Why, the man is crazy,” Jones mused. “What does he mean by saying that my jest is ill-timed? But why does he insist on my attention? He’s drunk,—that’s what he is; he’s drunk and quarrelsome. Well, let him be. What do I care?” And Alphabet Jones looked complacently at his white waistcoat and then over at his excitable *vis-à-vis*. Mr. Fairbanks was a little man of the Cruikshank pattern, very red and rotund, and as he talked he gesticulated.

“So I said to him, ‘There’s been a corner in rubies, but it broke, and that is the reason why I can give them at that price.’ He didn’t know what a corner was, and when I explained he took a note-book out of his pocket and wrote something in it. ‘I am making a collection of Americanisms for the Czarina,’ he said. ‘By the way,’ he added, ‘what is a Sam Ward?’ I told him. He laughed, and put it down——”

“His throat?”

Mr. Fairbanks glanced at Jones with unconcealed irritation: “Dr. Hammond, sir, says that punning is a form of paresis.”

“Be careful about that epsilon; it’s short.”

“Well, Mr. Jones, you ought to know how to pronounce the word

"better than I, for you have the disease and I haven't. Gentlemen, I insist——"

But Jones had begun to muse again. "That fat little brute is a type," he told himself. "I must work him in somewhere. I wonder, though, if I had not better leave him and go up to the baccarat. It might be more remunerative. It would be amusing," and Alphabet smiled at the fantasy of his own thought, "it would be amusing indeed if he tried to prevent me." He put his hand over his eyes and let Mr. Fairbanks ramble on.

"You see," he heard him say, in connection with something that had gone before, "a man in my business has to be careful. Now, there are rubies and rubies. I only handle the Oriental stones, which are a variety of the hyaline corindus. They are found in Ceylon, in Thibet, and in Burmah among the crumbings of primordial rock. But I have seen beauties that were picked from waste lands in China from which the granite had presumably disappeared. They are the most brilliant and largest of all. There is another kind, which looks like a burned topaz: it is found in Brazil and Massachusetts. Then there is the Bohemian ruby, which is nothing but quartz reddened by the action of manganese; and there are also imitations so well made that only an expert can tell them from the real. I keep a few of the latter on hand so as to be able to gauge a customer. Well, gentlemen, the Russian picked up two of them which I placed before him and put them to one side. He knew the false article at a glance. Your friend, Jones, that simpleton Nicholas Manhattan, would have taken one of the imitation if I had not prevented him, but this fellow was so clever about it that he won my immediate respect."

"Jones, indeed?" Alphabet muttered. "Why, the brute is as familiar as a Wanamaker advertisement!" He looked at him again: his face was like a brandied peach that had fallen into the fire, and his head was set on his shoulders like an obus on a cannon. "Bah!" he continued, "what is the use in being irritated at a beggar who is as ugly as a high hat at the sea-shore?"—"When you do me the honor to address me, sir," he said, aloud, "I will be obliged if you will call me Mr. Jones."

"Tut, tut!" the little man answered, and then, without further attention to Alphabet, he continued his tiresome tale:

"When the Russian had examined the rubies very carefully a second time, he said, half to me and half to himself, 'I think they will do.' Then, looking up at me, he added, 'Mr. Fairbanks, you do not make a hundred-thousand-dollar sale every day, do you?' 'No, your Excellency,' I answered,—you see, I made a dash at Excellency; Prince seemed sort of abrupt, don't you think?—'no, your Excellency, it does not happen over once a week.' He smiled at that, and well he might, for the biggest sale I had previously made amounted to but nine thousand dollars. 'Mr. Fairbanks,' he continued, 'the grand duke is rich, as you well know. I am not. You will understand me the better when I tell you that at present, unless cholera has visited Russia since I left (and I hope it has), there are exactly twenty-nine people in Petersburg who bear the same name and title as myself. Now, if the

grand duke purchases these rubies, what will my commission be? 'That is squarely put, your Excellency,' I answered,—'squarely put. Will his Imperial Highness pay cash for the rubies?'

"You might have asked him if his Imperial Highness would pay *rubis sur l'ongle*. But I remember you don't approve of wit."

This interjection came, of course, from Jones. Mr. Fairbanks, however, let it pass unnoticed. It may be that he did not understand.

"'Necessarily,' he replied. 'A recent ukase of the Czar's inhibits any member of the Imperial family from purchasing so much as a brass samovar on credit.' I bowed. 'A very proper and wise ukase that is, your Excellency. Under such circumstances I think I see my way to giving you one per cent.' He laughed at that, as though I had made a remark of great brilliance."

"I like that," Jones exclaimed, in spite of himself. "Why, you wouldn't be brilliant in a calcium light."

But this remark, like the former, passed unheeded. For the first time since his memory ran not to the contrary, it seemed to Jones that he was being ignored; and to ignore Jones! *Allons donc!*

"'Look at me,' said the Russian," Mr. Fairbanks continued. 'The grand duke will not buy these rubies except on my recommendation, and I value that recommendation at not a kopeck less than ten thousand dollars. It is to take or to leave. Choose, sir, choose.' And with that he picked up his hat. 'I cannot, your Excellency, I cannot.' He turned away and made for the door. 'Excellency,' I cried, 'I will give you five.' He wheeled about. 'If,' he said, 'you offer one per cent. when you can give five and three-fifths, you are just as well able to give nine and two-thirds.'"

"He was a lightning calculator, wasn't he?"

"'On my conscience,' I answered, 'I cannot give more than seven.' 'Ah!' he replied, 'I do not know how to haggle.' He reflected a moment. 'It is well,' he said; 'I accept.' Gentlemen, when he said that, I felt that I had done a good day's work. Apart from the commission I had a clean profit of eighteen thousand dollars; and eighteen thousand dollars is a tidy sum,—not to you, gentlemen, nor to Jones there, but to me."

"Ged, the little cad is getting sarcastic." And Jones laughed quietly to himself and finished his brandy-and-soda.

Mr. Fairbanks waved his arms and pounded the table so excitedly that he roused a waiter from a nap.

"Yes, bring the same," he cried. "Now, gentlemen, I am coming to the point. I insist on your attention. Mr. Jones, I will thank *you* not to interrupt,—unless it happens that you care to aid me with the details. Yes, sir, I said details,—d-e-t-a-i-l-s. Now wait a minute, will you? Gentlemen, I appeal to you. He shall wait. Beat it into his head—can't you?—that I am coming to the point, and very interesting, I promise, you will all find it to be."

"Tu te vantes, mon bonhomme, tu te vantes. Here's to you."

"Here's to you. Well, gentlemen, it was then one o'clock. I always lunch at that hour, and I asked the Russian if he would let me offer him a bite. 'I would very much like to try a Sam Ward,' he

said, 'and I might take some tea and a bit of toast.' 'That,' I replied, 'would be tasty with a little caviare.' I wanted to show him that, though a dealer in precious stones, I was first and foremost a man of the world."

Alphabet Jones rolled over in spasms of delight. "Divinities of Pindar," he shouted, "listen to that!"

"Gentlemen, gag that man,—gag him: I will be listened to. There, now, *will* you be quiet? You make me lose the thread. Where was I? Oh, yes: the Russian seemed to reflect a moment, and looked at his watch. 'I think,' he said, 'it would be better to go straight to the Brevoort House.' (The grand duke, I knew, was stopping there.) 'My prince is to go out this afternoon between two and three, and if you do not see him to-day it may be hard to manage it to-morrow.' 'I am at your orders, Excellency,' I answered. 'Business before pleasure.' 'Good, then,' he returned; 'we will take a droschky, or, better even, your railway that is in the air.' 'The elevated, you mean,' I said,—'the elevated. Yes, of course.' Inwardly I was well pleased that the suggestion should have come from him, for I am not over-fond of riding in a cab with a hundred and ten thousand dollars' worth of rubies in my pocket and a stranger for sole companion. For he was a stranger,—wasn't he?—and, by his own account, not well-to-do. But that Russian had a knack of disarming suspicion. And, besides, how was it possible for me to have any doubts about a man who fought as he had over the percentage? It would have been nonsensical. So I did the rubies up in cotton, put them in a box, and off we went. On the way to the elevated you ought to have seen how the people stared at that coat. All the time he kept up a delightful flow of conversation. He told me any number of interesting things about his country, and when I asked if he had read 'The Journey Due North' he told me that he had, and that when Sala was in Russia his father had entertained him at his country-house a few versts from Moscow. Think of that, now! Altogether, he made himself most agreeable. I asked him on the way if he thought that inasmuch as I was to have the honor of seeing the grand duke it would not be more in accordance with etiquette for me to put on a dress-coat. But he laughed, and said, no, the grand duke would never notice. Then he told me some very curious anecdotes about him,—how, for instance, he fainted dead away at the sight of an apple, and yet kept a balloon and an aeronaut, just as Jones there might keep a dog-cart and a groom. He told me, among other things, that at Petersburg the grand duke had a pet tiger, which would accept food from no one but him, and on my asking how the tiger got along when the grand duke was away, he said that the grand duke had him stuffed. Oh, he was very entertaining, and spoke English better than you would have imagined. We walked over from Eighth Street to the hotel, and when we reached it he took me straight up-stairs to his own room. 'If you will sit a minute,' he said, 'I will see if his Highness can receive you.' He went away, and I looked about me. The room into which I had been shown was a sitting-room with a bedroom opening from it. There was a writing-table standing against the door which led to the adjoining apartment, and while I was

waiting I just glanced at the things with which the table was littered. There were a number of foreign newspapers, but in what language they were printed I could not make out; there was a package of official-looking documents tied with a string, a great blue envelope addressed in French to the Prince Michel Zaroguine and post-marked Washington, and back of all, in a frame, the photograph of a man."

For some minutes previous Mr. Fairbanks had been speaking quite composedly, though Jones, with the observant eye of his class, had noticed that near the ears his cheeks and his forehead as well were wet with perspiration. But now abruptly he grew unaccountably excited and his speech displayed a feverish animation. His face had lost its scarlet; it had grown very white, and it seemed to the novelist that in some manner which he could not explain to himself it had taken on a not unfamiliar aspect. "H'm!" he reflected, "it's odd. I know I never saw the man before, and I am sure that I do not particularly care ever to see him again. Leigh ought to have more sense than to bring an orang-outang even into such a club as the Smallpox. Besides, what does he mean by boring every one to death? By gad, I believe he has put Leigh to sleep. It's worse than a play." But still he made no effort to move. In spite of himself, he felt vaguely fascinated, and, though he declined to admit it, a trifle ill at ease.

"I took up the photograph," Mr. Fairbanks continued, "and while I was examining it the Russian came back. In his hand he held a check-book. 'That's the grand duke himself,' he said. 'He will stop in here presently on his way out. There will be two or three members of the suite with him; and, that you may recognize his Highness at once, take a good look at the picture. When he comes in you must do this way: button your coat, please; thanks: now stand anywhere you like and make a low bow. Let me see you make one. Bravo! that is splendid. Only,—how shall I say?—do not let your arms hang in that fashion. The grand duke might think you had dropped something and were stooping to pick it up. However, that is a minor matter. It may be that he won't see you at all. But of all things remember this: under no circumstances must you speak to him unless he first addresses you, and then you must merely answer his question. In other words, do not, I pray you, try to engage him in conversation.' 'Does he speak English?' I asked. I couldn't help it. I was getting nervous. 'Now let us have the rubies,' he said. I took the box out of my breast-pocket and handed it to him. He opened it, drew the cotton aside, and ran his fingers lovingly over the gems. 'Yes,' he said, 'they will do.' Then he closed the box again, and put it in the drawer of the table at which he had taken a seat. 'If,' he continued, 'his Highness is satisfied, I will draw a draft for you, and Count Béziatnikoff will sign it. The count,' he went on to say, 'is the keeper of the Privy Purse. The draft itself is on the London Rothschilds, but they will cash it at Belmont's.' I did not quite like that arrangement: it did not seem entirely business-like. 'Your Excellency,' I said, 'it is the custom here to have checks for large amounts certified before they are offered in payment.' But I had to explain what certification meant before he understood me. 'That is nothing,' he said, 'that is nothing. If his

Highness is pleased, we will go to Belmont's together, or, if you prefer, we will sit here over a Sam Ward and let one of the hotel-clerks go to the bank in our stead.' There seemed to me nothing objectionable in that suggestion; for, after all, I could not exact of any one, however grand-ducal he might be, to go about with a hundred and ten thousand dollars in his waistcoat."

"Or in his trousers either."

"Or in his trousers either, as you very properly put it. Now, *Mr. Jones*— *Mr. Leigh*, look at me; *Colonel Barker*,—colonel,—I am coming to the point. Where's that waiter? Gentlemen, see here; watch that man there,—watch *Jones*. Don't take your eyes off *Mr. Jones*, but listen, all of you, to what I say. *Mr. Leigh*, you are looking at me: look at your friend, colonel, I insist. *Mr. Jones*, *you*, if you care to, can look at me. Now, gentlemen, now——"

"Have you got a camera concealed about your person?"

"No, I have not, but I have something that came from one. You wait a minute, and I'll show it to you. I'll show it to you all. Where did I leave off?"

"In his waistcoat-pocket."

"Thank you: so I did. Well, gentlemen, we sat there talking as pleasantly as you please. The Russian joked a bit, and said that he wanted a certified check from me,—the check for his commission, you remember,—and presently he got up and said he would see what was delaying his Highness. So I sat awhile, twirling my thumbs. Five minutes passed, ten minutes passed. I looked at my watch: it was almost half-past two. That draft, I told myself, won't be cashed to-day. I went to the window and looked out. I went to the door: there was no one in the hall but a chambermaid. I went back to my seat, and then, moved by my own uneasiness, I opened the drawer of the table. The box was gone! I took the drawer out. It was one that extended the entire width of the table; the further end of it had been cut off. I looked down and in through the place from which I had taken it. I could see into the next room! I pulled the table to one side, and there, just where the drawer had touched the door against which it had stood, was an oblong opening cut through the wood-work of the door itself. I was down-stairs in an instant. Gentlemen, the grand duke had gone to Philadelphia that very morning. No such person as Prince Zaroguine lodged in the hotel. The clerk came upstairs with me. 'That room,' he said, 'is occupied by a Frenchman, and the adjoining room belongs to a man who registered from Boston. Why, that's his picture there!' he exclaimed, pointing to the picture of the grand duke. 'I did not even know that they were acquainted. But they will be back; they have left their things; they haven't even paid their bills.' I did not wait for their return: if I had I might be waiting still. But I took the photograph, and down to Inspector Byrnes I posted. 'That,' said he, 'that is the picture of one of the 'cutest rogues in the land. He has as many names as the Czar of Russia himself.' And the original of that picture—— Gentlemen, here,—*Mr. Leigh*, here,—colonel, here is the picture itself. I have kept it with me ever since. The original of that picture sits before you.

Hold on to him, colonel. Jones, if you move I'll put a bullet through you. Mr. Leigh, do you ring for the police. Hold him, colonel. Disgorge, you scoundrel, disgorge! I have got you at last!" And then, before the astonished gaze of Alphabet Jones, Colonel Barker faded in a mist, Mr. Fairbanks lost his rotundity, his black coat changed to a blue swallow-tail with brass buttons, he grew twenty years younger, and, so far from being violent, he seemed rather apologetic than otherwise.

"It's six o'clock, sir," he said. "Will you order anything before the bar closes?"

Alphabet blinked his eyes. He was lying in a cramped position on the sofa. He was uncomfortable and very hot. He pulled himself together and looked around. Save for the waiter and himself, the room was deserted.

"Is there any baccarat going on up-stairs?" he asked.

"No, sir; the gentlemen are just going away."

"Well, well," he mused, "that was vivid. H'm! I'll work it up as an actual occurrence and send it on to the *Interstate*: it will be good for the two hundred and fifty which I meant to make at baccarat.—I say, waiter, get me a Remsen cooler, please."

Edgar Saltus.

TO MY FACE IN THE GLASS.

EYES, ye are sad; lips, ye are sadder still.
 How will it be when shortly ye shall taste
 The sharp salt of a tear, sent as in haste
 To tell ye, ye have comrades in your ill?—
 Thus shall ye drink of the salt drops that fill
 The mighty heart of sorrow, till the waste
 Of its abundance brims in tears misplaced
 As in the overflowing of a rill
 Big with the April rains, the thirsty mere
 Drinks deep of floods that fall not from the sky.
 —These thy deep waters, O my heart, have they
 Their origin in heaven!—Whence are they here?
 —We shall know all some day; for, heart, to die
 Is to have all these riddles rendered clear.

Amélie Rives.

OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP

WITH READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

[The Monthly Gossip will henceforth be an editorial department in which information will be volunteered upon any literary, scientific, or miscellaneous topic of general interest, and queries on such topics will be answered. Queries from all sources are invited, and every effort will be made to answer them fully and entertainingly. But it is requested that correspondents will refrain from sending queries to which sufficient answers may be found in such familiar books of reference as Brewer's "Reader's Handbook," Brewer's "Phrase and Fable," Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations," Wheeler's "Noted Names of Fiction," Lippincott's "Biographical Dictionary," Chambers's and other Encyclopædias, Classical Dictionaries, etc. All queries received before the 24th of December will be answered in the February number, and so on.]

A GREAT deal has recently been said about the genesis of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and, as might be expected, continual charges of plagiarism have been exploited in this, that, and the other journal. Mr. Stevenson himself explained to a reporter of the *New York Examiner* the origin of the story, as follows:

"On one occasion I was very hard up for money, and I felt that I had to do something. I thought and thought, and tried hard to find a subject to write about. At night I dreamed the story, not precisely as it is written, for of course there are always stupidities in dreams, but practically it came to me as a gift, and what makes it appear more odd is that I am quite in the habit of dreaming stories. . . . Even when fast asleep I know that it is I who am inventing, and when I cry out it is with gratification to know that the story is so good. So soon as I awake, and it always awakens me when I get on a good thing, I set to work and put it together. For instance, all I dreamed about Dr. Jekyll was that one man was being pressed into a cabinet, when he swallowed a drug and changed into another being. I awoke and said at once that I had found the missing link for which I had been looking so long, and before I went to sleep almost every detail of the story, as it stands, was clear to me. Of course, writing it was another thing."

This is very interesting. Nevertheless, if the story came to Mr. Stevenson not so much as a gift but rather as an inheritance from a long line of former possessors, there is still no flaw in his title. Absolute originality of incident is nowadays out of the question: the few possible germinal conceptions were long ago seized and appropriated by the early masters in fiction. The possible combinations and methods of treatment are infinite, however; and we are right in calling a story original where the ideas are treated and combined in a novel and striking manner. The germinal idea of the story that came to Mr. Stevenson in a dream is that of the double, the doppelgänger, an idea which may have originated with the first dream of the first man. When our savage ancestor found that his body could be asleep and quiescent while his soul was abroad, he naturally conceived of an *alter ego*, which through some curious association of ideas he came in time to confuse with his shadow and his mirrored reflection,—those mysterious *non-egos* which

mocked and mimicked his more substantial self. Comparative mythologists are fond of tracing to this germ the popular superstition in ghosts. As man's conscience developed he also grew to recognize the existence of a higher and a lower nature within himself. In the combination of all these ideas "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" became possible to the highly-civilized, artistic thinker of to-day. But these ideas can be traced back through the successive stages of their evolution in myth and literature. The folk-lore of all nations recognizes the double, frequently refining it into an embodied conscience, which haunts and dogs the sinner, thus differentiating the higher and the lower self of man into separate identities. The Greek woman's appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober is only another variation upon this thought, as are also the Biblical story of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity which turned him into a beast, and the classic legend of men ensnared by the lecherous wiles of Circe and transformed into swine. In folk-lore this germinal idea may be found in all that cycle of stories of which "Beauty and the Beast" is the type. In literature it has been treated with the most ingenious variety of detail, especially by the writers of the last century or so, —by Fouqué in "Sintram and his Companions," by Andersen in "The Shadow," by Mrs. Browning in "The Romaunt of Margret," by Gautier in "Le Chevalier double," by E. E. Hale in "My Double and How He Undid Me," by Poe in "William Wilson." The last has been seized upon by most of Stevenson's detractors as the obvious original of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Yet "William Wilson" is itself a very close paraphrase of an old Spanish drama called "El Embozado, ó el Encapotado." It is extremely unlikely that Poe ever read this drama, but it is wellnigh certain that he did come across the following passage in one of Byron's letters and did profit by it: "Shelley has been reading a strange drama entitled 'El Embozado.' It is so scarce that Washington Irving told me he had sought for it without success in several of the public libraries of Spain. The story is that a kind of Cipriano or Faust is through life thwarted in all his plans for the acquisition of wealth, honor, or happiness by a masked stranger, who stands in his way like some Alastor or evil spirit. He is at length in love: the day is fixed for his marriage, when the unknown contrived to sow dissension between him and his betrothed and to break off the match. Infuriate with his wrongs, he breathes nothing but revenge; but all his endeavors to discover his mysterious foe prove abortive: at length his persecutor appears of his own accord. When about to fight, the Embozado unmasks, and discovers the phantasm of himself, saying, 'Are you satisfied?' The hero dies with horror." This reads almost like an abstract of "William Wilson." Yet we are none the less grateful to Poe for giving us that weird and ominous tale. An obvious point of departure between Stevenson's story and all the others we have mentioned is that Mr. Hyde bears no outward resemblance to Dr. Jekyll, but is his exact opposite in appearance,—a repulsive monster in whom are concentrated all the evil qualities of the individual who in the attractive personality of Dr. Jekyll retains merely his own virtues. A hint of this idea had, indeed, found artistic expression in Hawthorne's "Dr. Grimshawe's Secret." In one of the preliminary studies to this work, found among Hawthorne's papers and appended to the last edition, the author's purpose in the spider which is Grimshawe's famulus is thus set forth: "The great spider shall be an emblem of the doctor himself; it shall be his craft and wickedness coming into this shape outside of him; and his demon; and I think a great deal may be made out of it." Much, indeed, might have been made out of it had the great romancer lived to perfect this book,—as much,

perhaps, as his legitimate successor has made out of Mr. Hyde. In its present form the conception is feebly grasped, the moral only dimly indicated.

But the literary detective has succeeded in finding a still closer parallel. A correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* calls attention in a recent number to a story in "Hood's Comic Annual" for 1876. (The Hood in question is, of course, the younger and insignificant Hood.) This story is called "The Coarse Captain," and, as analyzed by the *Pall Mall's* correspondent, is as follows:

"A bald-headed, knock-kneed, weak-eyed stock-broker of irreproachable respectability has for his next-door neighbor 'a fat, bottle-nosed, curly-headed, swearing sea-captain,' whom he has never seen, but whose unseemly behavior annoys him very much. I will not go into any details: suffice it to say, it is revealed to Mr. Mullyberry (after several queer complications) that he and the sea-captain are one. In the end, having the choice offered, Mr. Mullyberry decides to terminate his days as the sea-captain,—having, however, on the day before this choice takes effect, paid off (as Mr. Mullyberry) the captain's heavy debts and surrendered himself (in that character) to the police as the real perpetrator of a crime with which he has charged the captain. Of course on the next morning the cell is found empty. The captain ultimately reforms. I don't know," continues the correspondent, "whether you will think so, but I myself consider this another interesting case of literary coincidence."

A coincidence probably it is, and nothing more. But, even if Mr. Stevenson had read and remembered the story, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" remains none the less original and astonishing, the moral none the less overpowering.

D. L. D. sends the following query: "Has the Elder-Mother whom Andersen introduces into several of his stories any connection with the Alder-King or Erl-King of Goethe's ballad? I believe that both belong to the popular mythology of Scandinavia."

None whatever. The Elder-Mother (Hyldemoer) is a genuine figure in the folk-lore of Denmark, a sort of hamadryad or spirit who resides in the elder-tree and has the power of reviving old memories in man. But the Alder-King has no existence in folk-lore anywhere. His introduction into literature is entirely due to a mistranslation by Herder of the Danish word *Elle-Konge*. Elle means either "Alder" or "Elf," and Herder, in his paraphrase of an old Danish ballad, was misled by the former meaning into rendering the word as Erl-König, or Alder-King, instead of Elfen-König, or King of the Elves. The mistake was copied by Goethe in his ballad of "Der Erl-König," and the popularity of the latter poem has given the word a wide circulation. Viehoff, indeed, holds that Herder mistranslated the last part of the Danish name,—that it is properly *Kone* (woman), and not *Konge*, as above, and therefore that the shadowy and mysterious Alder-King, whose name has been a source of much ingenious conjecture among etymologists, is nothing more than an ordinary elf-woman.

A. G., who is interested in the history and folk-lore of brewing, has searched in vain through Wheeler's "Noted Names of Fiction" for an account of King Gambrinus. In other authorities he finds the notices imperfect and contradictory. He therefore applies to the Gossip for assistance. As the subject is an interesting one, it is worth while going somewhat into detail.

Gambrinus, Gambrivius, or Cambrinus (the name is also given as Campfer, Gamber, or Cimber) is the mythical inventor of beer or ale. He is usually

spoken of as a king or duke of Flanders and Brabant who flourished at some uncertain period in the remote past. But a tradition favored by mediæval German historians made him a king of the Tuiscones or ancient Germans, the seventh in descent from Noah, who succeeded his father, Marso, about 1730 B.C., founded the cities of Cambray and Hamburg (the latter was in effect known to the Romans as Gambrivium), and after a glorious reign of forty-four years, during which he extended the boundaries of his kingdom from the Rhine to Asia, passed away and was deified by his subjects. Gambrinus is represented as a portly gray-beard, rubicund, but dignified, with a crown on his head, the regal or ducal ermine on his shoulders, and a foaming tankard in his hand. Not infrequently he is set astride of a beer-barrel. In German taverns his portrait is usually accompanied by verses of which the following is a translation: "My name when I was living was Gambrinus, King of Flanders and of Brabant; I made malt from barley, and invented the brewing of beer. That is why the goodly company of brewers can truly claim that they have a king for a master. Let any other guild of workmen show the like of this patron!" Tacitus mentions that beer, or the juice of barley, was the favorite drink among the Germans of his time. Before then, however, beer was known in Egypt and in Greece, though never in Rome. The Egyptians attributed its invention to their god Osiris, and it is a curious coincidence that German tradition gives Isis to Gambrinus as his wife. Gambrinus figures in the folk-lore of other countries besides Germany. According to Holstein legends, Gambreen was the son of a giant, who crossed the Zuyder Zee on a sea-horse to take possession of his kingdom of Flanders and Brabant,—a legend that loses much of its marvellous aspect when it is remembered that sea-horse (*see-hengst*) was a name anciently given to any ship or vessel. In Ireland, Gambrivius is represented as a king and a beneficent magician who invented not only beer, but many wholesome beverages besides. Together with other contemporary monarchs, he makes his appearance at the mysterious midnight anniversaries when St. Lawrence weeps tears of fire. He seems to be fond of nocturnal gatherings, for, according to an old Franconian tradition, he assists at a spectral banquet given yearly, on the night of the 1st of May, by the kings of ancient France or Franconia, at the Teufelstisch (table of the Devil), near Graefenburg. There is an apocryphal legend of Gambrinus to be found in Deulin's "*Contes d'un Buveur de Bière*," which has been accepted as genuine by some comparative mythologists,—for example, John Fiske in "*Myths and Myth-Makers*,"—and duly resolved into a nature-myth, but which Deulin acknowledges to be of his own invention. According to this tale, Gambrinus was a poor fiddler who, jilted by his sweetheart, was on the point of hanging himself, when a tall man appeared and promised him unlimited wealth provided at the end of thirty years he would yield up his soul to Satan. Gambrinus agreed, and the devil taught him to make chiming bells and lager beer. When the new beverage was brought to the Holy Roman Emperor he at once made its inventor Duke of Brabant and Count of Flanders. For full thirty years Gambrinus sat beneath his belfry, surrounded by burghers and nobles quaffing beer and listening to the chimes. Then Satan sent out a messenger, named Jocko, who was to return with Gambrinus before midnight. But Jocko was so hospitably plied with Gambrinus's beer that he fell into a drunken stupor which lasted until next day, and he was then ashamed to return to hell. So Gambrinus lived calmly on for a couple of centuries, and at last turned into a beer-barrel.

A plausible explanation of the myth of Gambrinus resolves the name into a mere corruption of Jean Primus (John First), Duke of Brabant. This nobleman, who was born in 1251 and died in 1294, was a famous *trouvere*, and, being fond of popularity, he caused himself to be received into the guild of brewers in Brussels. His portrait was suspended in their guildhaus, or place of meeting, and represented him as clad in all the ducal insignia and holding a foaming tankard in his left hand. In course of time this portrait may have come to be looked upon as that of the inventor or god of beer, and so have given rise to the legend.

F. P. McM. writes to ask whether the Dupin of Poe's tales is a real character, like Gaboriau's Lecoq, or is intended as a description of Poe himself,—an embodiment of the detective ingenuity which he believed he might have exercised under similar circumstances.

C. Auguste Dupin is an amateur detective introduced into three of Poe's tales,—“The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Mystery of Marie Roget,” and “The Purloined Letter,”—in all of which he is represented as rendering important services to the Parisian police by unravelling apparently insoluble mysteries. According to a letter published some ten years ago in the *New York World* and signed F. D. C., the character was drawn after a real person, one C. Auguste Dupont, a man of acute analytical powers, who was frequently called in to aid the police in the manner Poe describes. “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” indeed, is very largely founded upon facts, which F. D. C. claims to have supplied to Poe, having learned them from Dupont himself, with whom he was very closely associated during a sojourn of seven years in Paris. “Dupont,” he adds, “merely laughed when he saw his name disguised in Charles Baudelaire's translation, nor did he ever take offence at the liberty I had taken in sending to Poe the true facts of the solution of the mystery,—facts which in their results were, of course, well known to the police authorities, although not in their details. Dupont had done much more work for the police than ever came to Poe's knowledge: if Poe had not used the name under so thin a disguise he might have learned more, and perhaps would have written better and more astounding and analytical tales.”

“WHO and what is the Baboushka?” asks L. M. G., who has evidently been reading Russian novels.

Baboushka is merely the Russian for old woman. But *the* Baboushka is a particular old woman in Russian folk-lore, a beneficent being whose vocation is similar to that of the German Santa Claus and the English Saint Nicholas. Russian parents feign that it is she who fills the stockings and dresses the tree on Christmas morning. The children are awakened by the cry of “Behold the Baboushka!” and spring up, hoping to see her before she vanishes out of the window. Tradition says that the Baboushka was a Jewish woman at work in her house when the wise men from the East passed on their way to Bethlehem. They cried to her to join them in their search for the Christ-Child, whose star was now shining in the heavens. “Nay,” she replied, “I must first set my house in order, then I will follow and find Him.” But when her work was done the three kings had passed on their way across the desert, and the star shone no more in the heavens. She never saw the Christ-Child; she is living and searching for Him still. For His sake she takes care of all little children, hoping

among them to find Him whom she neglected years ago; but she is doomed to perpetual disappointment. This same legend is told in Italy of the Befana, a personification of the feast of the Epiphany (Epifania), of which her name is a corruption. She is feigned to come down the chimney on the eve of the Epiphany, or Twelfth-Night (January 6), to reward or punish the children of the house, who hang their clothes, with empty pockets, round the hearth, hoping to have the pockets filled with gifts.


C. E. R. has heard the originality of Lincoln's famous phrase "of the people, by the people, and for the people" called in question, and he asks the Gossip to enlighten him.

This phrase, as every one knows, occurs in Abraham Lincoln's address at the dedication of the National Soldiers' Cemetery at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863. The full text of the sentence is as follows: "We here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain, that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth." The phrase was *not* original, but a quotation, conscious or unconscious, from Theodore Parker. In an address to the Anti-Slavery Society, May 13, 1854 (printed in "Additional Speeches," vol. ii, page 25), the great Abolitionist spoke of democracy as "a government of all the people, by all the people, and for all the people." A lady who was a member of his household for many years says that this phrase, though the result of long and careful hammering at a favorite thought, even yet failed to satisfy him. "It was not," she says, "quite pointed enough for the weapon he needed to use so often in criticising the national action, to pierce and penetrate the mind of hearer and reader with the just idea of democracy, securing it there by much iteration; and I can distinctly recall his joyful look when he afterwards read it to me in his library condensed into this gem: 'of the people, by the people, for the people.'" But even Parker was not original. As early as 1830, Daniel Webster had used these words in a public speech: "the people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people." And here is how the same idea was handled by Chief-Justice Marshall as far back as 1819: "The government of the Union . . . is, emphatically and truly, a government of the people. In form and in substance it emanates from them. Its powers are granted by them, and are to be exercised directly on them and for their benefit." (*McCullough vs. Maryland*, reported in 4 Wheaton, 316.)

So far we have been sailing along very comfortably. But now comes C. G., who propounds two queries which the Gossip finds himself unable to answer. He, therefore, refers them to the readers of this department.

1. What is the historical or literary name of the ivory throne of Denmark made of the horns of narwhals?
2. What is the origin of the term *masco*?

And here comes W. H. G. with another "stumper:" Who was the author of the line "Ubi sunt [?] pocula dulciora melle"? It will be seen that the introduction of the "O" with a comma before it would completely alter the meaning.

 Communications intended for this department should be addressed "Editor Our Monthly Gossip, Lippincott's Magazine, Philadelphia."

BOOK-TALK.

AS the Reviewer sits in his elegantly-appointed study and gazes around his table, laden down as it is with the illustrated books of the season, in which artist, engraver, printer, and binder have vied with one another to produce something that shall be worthy of the text they have undertaken to frame and illustrate, a trite thought occurs to him (there is no greater intellectual delight than a trite thought which suddenly renews its freshness), and he ponders with thankfulness upon the blessings of the printing-press. Nowadays, by a cunning process of mechanical reproduction, the works of our greatest artists are scattered over the world and brought home to the palaces of the rich and the hovels of the poor. Nor is the public the only gainer. Our Raphaels and Michael Angelos are no longer dependent upon the bounty of this or that pope, prince, or grand seigneur. They no longer paint masterpieces to be shut up within the four walls of a chapel, a palace, or a gallery where only privileged citizens or moneyed travellers can see them. They devote their best energies to work that is meant to carry its gentle and hallowing benison to every man with a soul capable of surrendering to its influence. The work goes out to the public: they do not have to quit their daily labors and invest in Cook's tickets. Our Raphael, perhaps, with that instinct for the excellent and that practical unwisdom which have always distinguished the man of genius, knocks at the door of *Lippincott's Magazine*, and, learning that this is not an illustrated monthly, turns sadly away to offer his services to some other periodical which needs the aid of a sister art to attract the unlettered. Or, mayhap, after leaving the Mæcenas of the editorial chair he calls upon the Ludovico de' Medici (the anachronism will be pardoned by the indulgent reader) who presides over the publication department, and there receives a commission to illustrate Gray's "Elegy," or "Lamia," or the "Deserted Village," to marry his pencil to immortal verse. Things have changed since the old days: there are many Mæcenases now, and many Ludovicos, and they only reign, they do not govern. The public is the final arbiter: if it likes Raphael, Mæcenases and Ludovicos innumerable will fight for the privilege of employing him.

If we are to continue in this grandiloquent strain, we shall have to call Will H. Low the Raphael of the Christmas books. Surely no (original) art-book issued in this country was nobler or more beautiful than the "Lamia" which this artist brought out in 1885. To-day there is a masterpiece that excels it,—the same artist's "Odes and Sonnets of Keats" (J. B. Lippincott Company). To the Reviewer's taste, it is an advance upon "Lamia;" and what higher praise can he give? Perhaps this is due to the fact that the greater excellence of the plate-printing—which is quite noticeable and seems to indicate that there is no degree of perfection out of the eventual reach of the Forbes process—has mastered more completely the subtler beauties of the artist's fancy. In Mr. Low's work we have the old Greek spirit, the faëry and romantic spirit of the chivalrous ages, reproduced for us exactly as Keats felt and described them. Rarely has the magic of words been so successfully transmuted into the magic of forms and faces.

Two other handsome volumes come to us from J. B. Lippincott Company,—"The Deserted Village," etchings by M. M. Taylor, and "Eudora, A Tale of Love," by M. B. M. Toland, illustrated by H. Siddons Mowbray and W. Hamilton Gibson. The former is bound and printed in luxurious style. The etchings are good, but a little amateurish, and they do not always seize upon the salient features of the text. In the other volume the most ingenious and opulent fancy has been expended upon a text that would seem somewhat barren, and the result is one of the most exquisite little picture-books imaginable.

You are won over by the first sight of "The Vision of Sir Launfal" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). The binding is of unusual beauty and originality, the printing is perfect, the thick heavy paper is a delight to gaze upon and to handle. But the illustrations are disappointing, and not all the art of the engraver (Juengling) can redeem them. The frontispiece portrait gives you a painful shock. You first discover that it is meant for a man, and a further exercise of ingenuity reveals to you that the man is Lowell. It is a relief to find that the pictures which follow are better,—nay, that the landscapes are very good, even admirable, in their way, though they do not fairly illustrate the poem. The figure-drawings range from the commonplace to the unpleasant. The two pictures of Christ and the nun's head fall into the latter group. The head- and tail-pieces are pretty enough. Publishers should compare this book with Mr. Low's work, and learn that something more than a knowledge of drawing is necessary for the illustration of a poem. There should be an intimate unison of feeling between artist and poet, or the supreme meaning of the verse lacks an interpreter.

This truth finds a less signal exemplification in another handsome volume, "Enoch Arden" (E. P. Dutton & Co.), which is illustrated by two very clever artists, Edmund H. Garrett and Charles Copeland, the engravings being made under the supervision of George T. Andrew. The drawings, considered by themselves, are almost uniformly good, but somehow they do not adequately illustrate the poem, they give no fillip to your imagination. A far more obvious truth is thrust in the faces of all who choose to examine "The Bridal of Triermain" (Lee & Shepard), with illustrations by Percy Macquoid,—namely, that artists who don't know how to draw, and printers and binders who have no taste, should not be allowed to lay their semi-civilized hands upon a fine poem.

"The Recollections of a Minister to France," by E. B. Washburne, which have run their course in *Scribner's Magazine*, now appear in two portly and comfortable-looking volumes (Scribners). Mr. Washburne, it will be remembered, was minister to France from 1869 to 1877, a term which embraced the Franco-Prussian war and the fall of the empire. He stood at his post in the hour of danger, and succeeded in rendering efficient aid to the German denizens of Paris, thus arousing the enmity of such extremists as Jules Favre. His courage and integrity, however, ended in winning for him the respect of every one, and he left his post universally regretted. Mr. Washburne's personal character shines out conspicuously in this frank and simple record of events. He was a plain, blunt man, knowing little of political intrigue, with little philosophical insight, seeing only the obvious, but seeing that thoroughly and in its due proportions. Perhaps at a period like that of the Commune, which was the result of accident and not of any deep-laid plot, the obvious view was the correct one. At all events, these recollections are very interesting reading, and will be consulted by future historians.

A great deal of patience, ingenuity, and research has been rather uselessly expended by Ten. Alcott in the preparation of a handsome oblong volume which on the title-page is called "Nativity: its Facts and Fancies, Legends and Lore" (John Wiley & Sons); though, oddly enough, on the cover the sub-title is given the preference, and "Gems, Talismans, and Guardians, their Sentiment and Language," appears as the catch-title. People who are fond of arduous trifling may be interested in the book, and their interest will no doubt be stimulated by the chance of competing for a prize—one hundred dollars for the best "nativity"—which the author offers to his purchasers.

"Interior Decoration," by Arnold W. Brunner and Thomas Tryon (Wm. T. Comstock), is made up of papers that were received with favor on their first publication in *Building*, have been revised and partly rewritten, and, with the addition of many new illustrations, are now presented in a handsome and convenient quarto form.

"Guatemala, the Land of the Quetzal," by William T. Brigham (Scribners), is the result of three visits to the country, in which the author traversed it from the Atlantic to the Pacific, making the journey partly by boats, partly on foot, and partly on horseback. He is a keen observer, and master of a pleasant and agreeable style. Five chapters out of the twelve detail the incidents of the trip, the others handle such miscellaneous topics as the geographical and political features of Guatemala, its botany and zoology, its historical and archæological interests, the maritime and commercial advantages of its sea-coast, its principal cities, etc. This may be recommended as altogether the best book on a little travelled region. The numerous illustrations add greatly to its value. The same publishers send us "Down the Islands, a Cruise to the Caribbees," by William Agnew Paton, the record of a journey through Barbadoes, St. Kitts, Antigua, Trinidad, and other of the Windward Islands, and to British Guiana, full of keen-sighted observations on the life, manners, and customs of the natives, and profusely, as well as elegantly, illustrated by M. J. Burns, who visited the localities named for this purpose.

"The Sportsman's Paradise; or, The Lake Lands of Canada," by B. W. Watson (Lippincott), is another book of travel that can be heartily recommended. Over and above its value as a description of the country, it is a narrative of sporting adventures, full of gay humor and vivid interest. The illustrations, by Daniel C. and Harry Beard, are excellent.

Wallace Bruce's "Old Homestead Poems" (Harpers) are an evident imitation of Will Carleton's ballads, but, like most imitations, they fail in catching the true spirit of the master. Carleton is a poet by instinct; Mr. Bruce seeks to reproduce his spirit by a logical process. The illustrations are not notable. Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney's "Bird-Talk" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) is, on the other hand, a volume of genuine and delightful lyrics, and the head-line illustrations supplement the text in a charming manner. "Ballads about Authors," by Harriet Prescott Spofford (D. Lothrop & Co.), are clever bits of versifying, but the accompanying illustrations, by Edmund H. Garrett, are not entirely satisfactory. Exactly why "Geraldine, a Souvenir of the St. Lawrence" (Ticknor & Co.), which is now republished in a handsome illustrated form, should have caught the public taste the Reviewer is at a loss to determine. It is a metrical novel in

the measure of "Lucile" (which the anonymous author of "Geraldine" is at some pains to explain he had never read before completing his own work), and concerns the semi-bigamous loves of one Percival Trent with his betrothed, Geraldine Hope, and a fascinating widow named Mrs. Lee, in the course of which the Deity is invoked with unnecessary frequency and devoutness. The illustrations and mechanical execution are both good.

Among the juvenile books of the season there is nothing more charming than Fanny Courtenay Baylor's "Juan and Juanita" (Ticknor & Co.), the story of how two little Mexican children, carried off by the Comanches, escape from their captors, and after a series of exciting adventures find their way home across three hundred miles of mountains and deserts,—unless, indeed, it be Howard Pyle's "The Wonder Clock" (Harpers), which contains twenty-four clever little stories,—one for every hour of the day,—by the author-artist, with rhymed prefaces by Miss Katharine Pyle. The greatest charm of this book lies in the illustrations, which catch the manner of Walter Crane without any servility of imitation. Ida Waugh's "Alphabet Book," with verses by Amy E. Blanchard (Lippincott), should be one of the favorites in the race, if only for the beauty of the pictures and the excellence of the mechanical features; and this book is closely pressed by another publication from the same house,—“Prince Little Boy and Other Tales out of Fairy-Land,” by that wonderfully versatile gentleman, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell. The stories are charming in conception and execution, and are delightful not only to the younger folk but to the children of larger growth who can read between the lines and detect their subtle humor and wisdom. Juveniles of more serious aim are H. H. Boyesen's "Modern Vikings" (Scribners), stories of life and sport in the Norseland of to-day; Charles Carleton Coffin's "The Drumbeat of the Nation," which tells the story of the first period of the Rebellion, from its outbreak to the close of 1862, in a vigorous and dramatic style; "The Boyhood of Living Authors," by W. H. Rideing (T. Y. Crowell & Co.), entertaining sketches of the early lives of famous writers like Aldrich, Howells, Fawcett, Stockton, Clark Russell, Gladstone, Whittier, etc.; "Horse, Foot, and Dragoons, Sketches of Army Life at Home and Abroad," by Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum (Harpers), a capital delineation of the poetry and romance of a soldier's life, with more than seventy excellent illustrations by the author; and "The Story of the American Indian," by Elbridge S. Brooks (D. Lothrop & Co.), a well-written historical sketch embodying a strong plea for justice to the red man.

Of the other books that have been accumulating on the Reviewer's desk, the following are the most important: From Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., a new translation by Isabel F. Hapgood of Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables," which has suffered so much from former *traduttori traditori* that it should be a comfort to all right-minded people to find it has at last fallen into competent hands; "Fairy Legends of the French Provinces," translated by Mrs. M. Carey, a book that appeals to young and old alike, especially if the old are interested in that most fascinating of all studies,—comparative folk-lore; and "From Heart and Nature," a volume of fair magazine verse by Sarah K. and Charles K. Bolton. From S. C. Griggs & Co., "Hegel's Philosophy of the State and of History," by George S. Morris, an intelligent exposition of two of the German philosopher's less abstruse works; and "Men, Places, and Things," by William Mathews, that prolific writer and compiler who never wearies either himself or his readers. From Charles Scribner's

Sons, "A Story of the Golden Age," by James Baldwin, a very readable rendering into juvenile English of old classic myths, the text rendered still more interesting by Howard Pyle's graceful illustrations; and "Frau Wilhelmine," by Julius Stinde (translated by Harriet F. Powell), being the concluding part of "The Buchholz Family," that delightful series of amiable satires upon the German middle classes. From G. P. Putnam's Sons, "The Best Reading," by Lynds E. Jones, a second supplement to the best *catalogue raisonné* of modern books that has ever appeared; "The Kentucky Resolutions of 1798," an historical study of an interesting subject by Ethelbert Dudley Warfield; "German Fantasies by French Firesides," a collection of graceful fairy tales and stories by Richard Leander, translated from the German by Pauline C. Lane; "Half-Hours with the Stars," by Richard A. Proctor, a plain and easy guide to the constellations, showing in twelve maps the position for the United States of the principal star-groups night after night throughout the year, with introduction and explanations; "A Vacation in a Buggy," an entertaining sketch of travel in Berkshire, Massachusetts; and "Historic Girls," by E. S. Brooks, with a few passable illustrations, a companion to the same author's "Historic Boys" of last year, giving stories of girls who have influenced the history of their own time, from Queen Zenobia to Princess Pocahontas. From Ticknor & Co., "The Longfellow Prose Birthday Book," edited by Laura W. Johnson, being extracts from the journals and letters of Longfellow arranged in the well-known birthday-book form; and two illustrated small quarto gift-books, "The Swanee River" and "My Old Kentucky Home," both of them well-known popular songs by Stephen C. Foster, and both illustrated by Charles Copeland, who in the second and better book has called in the assistance of Mary Hallock Foote. From Cupples & Hurd, "Matthew Calbraith Perry," by William Elliot Griffis, an interesting biographical sketch of a very interesting character, with portraits and other illustrations that detract more from the elegance than from the value of the volume; "Rollo's Journey to Cambridge," illustrated by Francis G. Attwood, the seventh edition of one of the most delightful little skits ever perpetrated by college undergraduates; "Thoughts," by Ivan Panin, a collection of apothegms which range from the very bright to the very dreary and so are fitted to meet all tastes; and "Diet in Relation to Age and Activity," by Sir H. Thompson, a useful little manual on a very important subject. From Lee & Shepard, "Faith's Festivals," by Mary Lakeman, a commonplace but kindly little story, beautifully printed and bound; "Only a Year, and What it Brought," by Jane Andrews, illustrated by Charles Copeland, another juvenile story, in which the text hardly justifies the elegance of the setting; "Ça Ira; or, Danton in the French Revolution," an entertaining historical study, by Laurence Gronlund; and a series of pretty little fifty-cent booklets,—William Knox's "Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal be Proud?" Tennyson's "Ring Out, Wild Bells," Mrs. Hemans's "The Breaking Waves Dashed High," Edmund H. Sears's "That Glorious Song of Old," Gray's "Elegy," and Domett's "It was the Calm and Silent Night," the first three illustrated by Miss L. B. Humphrey, the fourth by Alfred Fredericks, the fifth by Birket Foster, and the last and poorest by an artist who wisely reserves his name. From Castell Brothers, a London house, two gift-books of a similar size, shape, and price, but charmingly illustrated in colors, the first being Mrs. Hemans's poem again, this time under its original title of "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers," and the second a collection of Scripture texts entitled "On the Wing."

CURRENT NOTES.

THAT is a rather dangerous proposition put forth by the manufacturers of some of the patented or proprietary articles of food, that their products possess a superior wholesomeness because they contain a drug of some particular medicinal property. Phosphates, alum, lime, arsenic, calomel, etc., have their places as specifics for different diseases, and are invaluable medical remedies, each in its place. But they are not cure-alls. The physician who should prescribe either calomel, or strychnine, or rhubarb three times a day to man, woman, and child, sick or well, because either of such drugs is a well-known remedy for some certain disease, would receive but little honor from the fraternity and less practice from the community.

No one will controvert this statement; yet we find manufacturers of baking-powders and other articles designed for use in food claiming superior hygienic virtue for their productions and urging their continuous use because they contain some medicinal drug,—alum, lime, or phosphates,—although well aware, as they must be, of the fact that with the constant use of such article this drug must pass into our systems daily, no matter what may be our physical conditions or requirements, or whether or not we may be suffering from some ailment wherein the use of such drug would be positively detrimental. Alum and lime are valuable medicaments in certain diseases; but they should no more be taken indiscriminately, day after day, and without the prescription of a physician, than arsenic, aconite, or calomel. The same may be said of lime phosphates; indeed, there are conditions of the system, particularly with women, when the prudent physician would be loath to permit its use even as a medicine.

The fallacy of this claim of the manufacturers of phosphatic baking powders will be apparent to all when the fact, well known to physicians, is stated, that in average health and with ordinary food the body gets more phosphates than are required or can be assimilated, as is evidenced by the fact that they are constantly being expelled in the excretions both solid and liquid; likewise the statement that it is necessary to add phosphates to the baking powder to restore to the flour those which have been lost in the milling, for it is true that fine flour as at present made actually contains a larger percentage of phosphates than the grain of wheat itself.

The object of baking powders is not to provide the body with a medicine, but simply to vesiculate or make light the mixture of flour, so as to render it when baked easy of mastication and perfectly digestible. The most celebrated experts in the business have worked for the perfection of an article that should do this mechanically, adding to or taking from the flour nothing, nor in any way effecting a change in its properties or constituents. When this has been done the perfect leavening agent has been discovered. The manufacturers of the Royal Baking Powder have succeeded in this so far as to make a leavening agent that vesiculates and raises the loaf most perfectly, and without changing the properties of the flour, while the residuum from it has apparently been reduced to a minimum. The recent official tests show, on the other hand, that the best the

phosphatic baking-powder makers can do is to produce an article that is one-third or more residuum or impurity.

We want our food pure; especially do we not wish to take all sorts of uncertain matters with it at the dictum of manufacturers who may find it cheaper to claim a virtue for the impurities than to remove them.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY have in press a volume of Popular Essays for Women, by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, entitled "Doctor and Patient." The work is largely made up of what might be called, with reason, Essays of Advice to Women. They are grave and thoughtful in tone, and should command the attention of women well and ill.

THE success of the beautiful edition of Keats's "Lamia," illustrated by Will H. Low, and published by J. B. Lippincott Company last season, was such that orders have already been received for two-thirds of the edition of the new companion volume, "Odes and Sonnets of Keats," in advance of its publication. A Boston house announces the "Endymion" of Keats, illustrated by W. St. John Harper, as in preparation. This seems to be hardly necessary, as it is well understood that the series so admirably illustrated by Mr. Low, and now in course of publication by the J. B. Lippincott Company, will comprise all Keats's poems. —*New York Mail and Express*, November 1, 1887.

ONE of the most important of recent literary announcements is that of a new edition of "Chambers's Encyclopædia," which is now under way, and which has for many years been engaging the energies of trained writers and specialists both in Great Britain and in America, under the direction of Messrs. Chambers in Edinburgh and J. B. Lippincott Company in Philadelphia. The work is printed from entirely new plates. A large proportion of the articles have been rewritten, to adapt them to the present position of the science or branch of knowledge to which they belong. The rest have been revised, and no old article has been retained without verification. Special regard has been paid to American and colonial subjects. The more important articles on matters connected with America have been written in the United States, and in subjects where the American view or practice diverges from that of the United Kingdom a special paragraph has been added from American sources. A considerable addition has been made to the number of maps, always an important feature in a work of reference.

A NEW library edition of the Waverley Novels, octavo, published by J. B. Lippincott Company, in connection with Adam & Charles Black, is just completed. Each volume contains an entire novel, printed on fine paper, in bold, legible type, illustrated with steel plates by eminent engravers. It is the best ever offered to the American public, and the price is so low that all desiring a good edition have now an opportunity of possessing it.

MR. JOSEPH JEFFERSON is responsible for the latest explanation of the word "chestnut." He attributes the introduction of the word in its slang sense to Mr. William Warren, the veteran comedian of Boston. "There is a melodrama," Mr. Jefferson said to a reporter of the *Philadelphia Press*, "but little known to the present generation, written by William Dillion and called 'The

Broken Sword.' There were two characters in it,—one a 'Captain Xavier' and the other the comedy part of 'Pablo.' The captain is a sort of Baron Munchausen, and in telling of his exploits says, 'I entered the woods of Collaway, when suddenly from the thick boughs of a cork-tree——' Pablo interrupts him with the words, 'A chestnut, captain; a chestnut.' 'Bah!' replies the captain. 'Booby, I say a cork-tree.' 'A chestnut,' reiterates Pablo. 'I should know as well as you, having heard you tell the tale these twenty-seven times.' William Warren, who had often played the part of 'Pablo,' was at a 'stag' dinner two years ago, when one of the gentlemen present told a story of doubtful age and originality. 'A chestnut,' murmured Mr. Warren, quoting from the play. 'I have heard you tell the tale these twenty-seven times.' The application of the lines pleased the rest of the table, and when the party broke up each helped to spread the story and Mr. Warren's commentary. And that," concluded Mr. Jefferson, "is what I really believe to be the origin of the word 'chestnut.'"

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE FOR EXHAUSTION.—Dr. A. N. Krout, Van Wert, Ohio, says, "I found it decidedly beneficial in nervous exhaustion."

FEW presents could be more acceptable to an intelligent boy or girl than the "Young Folks'" series of histories published by J. B. Lippincott Company. There are three volumes,—*"Our Young Folks' Plutarch,"* by Rosalie Kaufman, *"Our Young Folks' Josephus,"* by William Shepard, and *"Our Young Folks' Roman Empire,"* by William Shepard. They are handsomely bound and illustrated, and the letter-press is at once entertaining and instructive. The volumes are put up in a box, or are sold separately. William Shepard, by the way, is one of the pen-names of William Shepard Walsh, author of *"Faust,"* etc.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE.—Beware of imitations.—Imitations and counterfeits have again appeared. Be sure that the word "HORSFORD'S" is on the wrapper. None are genuine without it.

THE custom of throwing one or more old shoes after the bride or groom either when they go to church to be married or when they start on their wedding-journey is so old the memory of man stretches not back to its beginning. Some think it represents an assault and is a lingering trace of the custom among savage nations of carrying away the bride by violence; others think that it is a relic of the ancient law of exchange or purchase, and that it formerly implied the surrender by the parents of all dominion or authority over their daughter. It has a likeness to a Jewish custom mentioned in the Bible. Thus, in Deuteronomy we read that when the brother of a dead man refused to marry his widow she asserted her independence of him by "loosing his shoe." Also, in Ruth, when the kinsman of Boaz gave up his claim to the inheritance of Ruth and to Ruth also, he indicated his assent by plucking off his shoe and giving it to Boaz. It was also the custom of the Middle Ages to place the husband's shoe on the head of the nuptial couch, in token of his domination.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE A TONIC RESTORATIVE.—Dr. H. K. Clarke, Geneva, New York, says, "It has proved of great value for its tonic and revivifying influence."

A "FROM tongue to tongue literature" has, it appears, crept around the name of Ovid. Signor A. de Nino has thought it interesting to print some of these local traditions. Among the people in Sulmona, Ovid enjoys the reputation of a great magician, merchant, prophet, preacher, saint, and even paladin. In the

capacity of the first he guards the treasures supposed to be concealed in his villa; and many are the stories which the peasants tell of vain efforts to carry them off on the eve of the Annunciation. His rôle as a merchant is connected with his journey to Athens and afterwards in Asia. Like Virgil, Ovid is believed to have announced the coming of Christ. As a warrior, he is associated in the popular fancy with the peers of Charlemagne.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE IN PROSTRATION.—Dr. F. C. Hawley, Cananacigua, New York, says, "I used it in a case of congestion of the lungs, where there was great prostration, with marked benefit."

THE rapid growth of understanding and taste for art in this country has certainly been most gratifying and remunerative to manufacturers and publishers of art subjects and industrial art, but it has at the same time imposed on them the arduous task of keeping step with this development in the improvement of their own products, lest they drop behind and be passed by the numerous competitors in their branch of industry who understand how to keep abreast or just a little ahead of the general public in taste and general art knowledge.

In Prang's publications for this year's holidays a great stride is perceivable in the designs, but particularly in the form in which they are offered, and in the decorations with which they are embellished.

Among the cards are flower-, landscape-, animal-, and figure-designs by such artists as Miss L. B. Humphrey, F. S. Church, Miss Fidelia Bridges, Walter Satterlee, Ida Waugh, etc. Perhaps the most æsthetic card is wholly by the poet-artist, Mrs. Celia Thaxter,—a branch of olive in full fruitage, very realistically painted, with a Greek motto in praise of the olive, as consecrated to Athene, and on the reverse a poem by Mrs. Thaxter, in autograph reproduction.

Many of the cards are mounted on hand-decorated mounts, or enclosed in envelopes inscribed as a real letter and supplied with a very pretty conceit in the form of a Santa Claus postage-stamp, correct in color, perforated and pasted on, and stamped off with a regulation obliterating stamp. The satin art-prints, the sachets, handkerchief-holders, and pockets, are very elegant.

A great novelty this year is a new material used for decorating the mounts for many of the cards. It is called Metalline, and is as true an imitation of decorative metal-work as it is possible to conceive. The effects are in old silver, old gold, aluminum, nickel, brass, copper, bronze, old iron, etc. It is no kind of process-work, but every bit is hand-made, thereby retaining the individual touch of the artist.

In calendars, this year's line is especially rich in variety and novelty; and, besides several booklets, the Messrs. Prang have added to their list five art-books in imitation of water-color, which form quite a prominent feature of this year's line. One of these, a juvenile, is from the brush of Mrs. Rose Mueller Sprague, and is entitled "A Gay Day for Seven." The other four are by Louis K. Harlow, who has furnished each with illustrations in color as well as in monotone. They are entitled "Echoes in Aquarelle from Along Shore," "A Christmas Processional," "The Voice of the Grass," and "Home of Evangeline," and they all come in elegant and novel styles of binding.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE IN NERVOUS IRRITABILITY.—Dr. B. B. Grover, Rushford, New York, says, "I have prescribed it for nervous irritability, with marked results."

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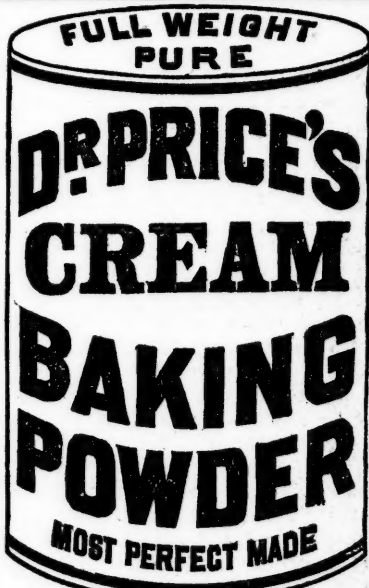
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